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292 A rich woman's cap is shown in Fig. 31. The top is of woolen cloth;
● 531 the front is decorated with an ornamental silver disc called *tusaxta*, which is described below (Fig. 63). The lower part of the cap is of black

Fig. 28. The Summer Costume of an Impoverished Yakut.

Fig. 29 (70–9229). Fur Cap worn by Men.

Fig. 30 (70–8509). Fur Hood worn by Women.

foxskin and at the back covers the neck and hangs down the back. In form it resembles the old caps of rich Kirghiz women.

531 Fig. 32*ab* shows the front and
291 back of an ornamented top for a woman's cap, decorated with tiny many colored beads. On the front (Fig. 32*a*) is a round silver plate *tusaxta* and on the back (Fig. 32*b*) a red cloth figure, the whole resembling the hat of a Catholic prelate. Beneath this, silver ornaments are fastened to the cloth between two bands of embroidery
177 in silk. Fig. 33 shows two Yakut women from Yakutsk wearing felt
291 hats called *kergemsex* which are imported from European Russia. In

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practically exterminated by hunters in Yakut Province and its skin is very expensive. Lynx coats are generally found in rich families who have inherited them from their parents.

The type of woman's coat shown in Fig. 35 is called *parchevoi sanayax*, from the Russian *parcha*, which means silver or gold brocaded material used for the ceremonial clothing of priests. The back and sides of the coat

Fig. 35. Woman's Coat decorated with Beaded Bands.

are covered with strips of *parcha*. It is lined with squirrel and covered with land otter. The skirt is trimmed with lynx. On the back and sides may be seen various decorative pieces of silver (*simax*). The collar is of sable leg fur. As in other Yakut overcoats, this skirt is also slit at the back to facilitate riding. The photograph (Fig. 35), taken by the author, is of a Yakut woman of Yakut Province from whom the coat was purchased. The beaded decorations on the right side of the coat are called

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sasyltumsa, meaning fox's nose. On the left side of the coat is attached the strike-a-light (*xatat*) (see Fig. 36) with a leather bag for tinder (*kyalyk*); the cover of the pocket is decorated with a silver ornament. Also attached to the coat are the *iskax*, small pincers with which women pull out their pubic hair, and *sabaska*, a little wooden calendar. In addition to the silver pendants and bead decorations the coat is embroidered in silk. All the pendants on the left side of the coat are called *ottuk simaha*.

Fig. 36 (70-8633). Steel for making Fire.

The back of a rich woman's *sanayax*, black cloth decorated with silver embroidery, is illustrated in Fig. 37. The collar and skirt are covered with the valuable sea otter fur. The border of the skirt and its slit are trimmed with lynx. The silver embroidery, is, I believe, not original with the Yakut but is an adaptation from Russian art.

Some additional women's *sanayaxes* in the Museum collection merit description. A decorated coat of a foalskin with the hair on has a skirt trimmed with lynx. Above the trimming is a checker work strip made of alternate black and white squares, the white of horse legs and the black of horse and cowskins. On the back is appliquéd a figure made of lynx and *tarbagan* (a kind of marmot—*arctomys* spec.) skins. This, called *kybytya*, means a wedge, but the figure is in the form of outstretched wings (Fig. 38) and, according to the Yakut, symbolizes the shoulder blades and has a magical significance.

Fig. 37 (70-9068). Back of a Highly Ornamented Coat, the Type worn by Rich Women. The decorative motives are embroidered in silver thread.

The preference for *tarbagan* as coat material, says Sieroszevski,[1] originated evidently in their former abode in southern Siberia. In their present territory *tarbagan* is lacking. But Baron Toll[2] saw this animal to the north of the Verkhoyansk Mountain Ridge as did the writer in various parts of Yakutsk Province.

[1] Sieroszevski, *ibid.*, 335.
[2] Toll, E., *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Russische Reiches*, 100.

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abdomen uncovered in front, which deficiency is made up by the wearing of warm stomachers.

A pair of woman's trousers of curried elkskin ornamented with beads and brass bells is illustrated in Fig. 39. To these are attached two rings to which leggings, stockings, or high boots may be tied. The long leather strings are intended to tie around the stomach protector.

In some cases the short pantalets have developed into long, tight trousers, the lower ends of which are tied around the legs and over the ankles with strings. Many Yakut, particularly near Russian settlements, wear wide trousers of the Russian style. Trousers are made chiefly from reindeer or calf leather and, for the winter, are fur-lined. Near Russian settlements trousers of cotton or plush are used during the summer.

We turn our attention here to two peculiarities in the style of Yakut clothing: First, the fancy for flat collars which may be seen in all the illustrations of men's as well as women's clothing. The collar is always of different material and color from that of the coat or shirt. Cloth coats have plush collars. Fur coats usually have collars of more valuable peltry than the rest of the garment. The collars of mare or cowskin coats are of the same material, but in black. Even the calico shirt has a collar. Second, Yakut coats always open in the middle of the front and may thus be distinguished from Buryat or Mongol coats which open near the right shoulder.

Tailoring is the exclusive work of women. They use no special patterns in cutting out their materials, but follow the form of some old garment, or trust entirely to memory. They know all the Russian stitches, but prefer the simple running stitch, which they use not only in sewing skins, but also cloth and calico. They also employ the back stitch, cross stitch, and button hole stitch. Their stitching is uneven and coarse. They do but little embroidery. The old embroidery patterns were made with silk, sinew thread and horsehair (from the mane or tail).

A general name for any kind of footwear is *eterbes*, from Turkic *etik*. Footwear varies with the season and its use for riding or walking on snow, in water, or on rocky and swampy ground. The most characteristic Yakut footwear, called *sāry-eterbes*, or horseskin boots, may be seen in Fig. 40*b*. These are made of dressed and dyed black hide from the hind quarters of a horse. The flat sole is turned up to form the instep and sewn to the top, forming a wedge. The seams are made with great care and the boots are waterproof. A buckle back of the ankles serves

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to keep the boot tight. As the top is made in one piece with the front part of the boot-leg it becomes folded, the folds being softly dressed. These high-topped boots reach the thighs. The tops of the bootlegs are decorated with colored cloth or plush. The sole is made of a thick piece of horsehide, while the top is made of the same hide split in two. The northern Yakut use sealskin for soles when it is obtainable. The

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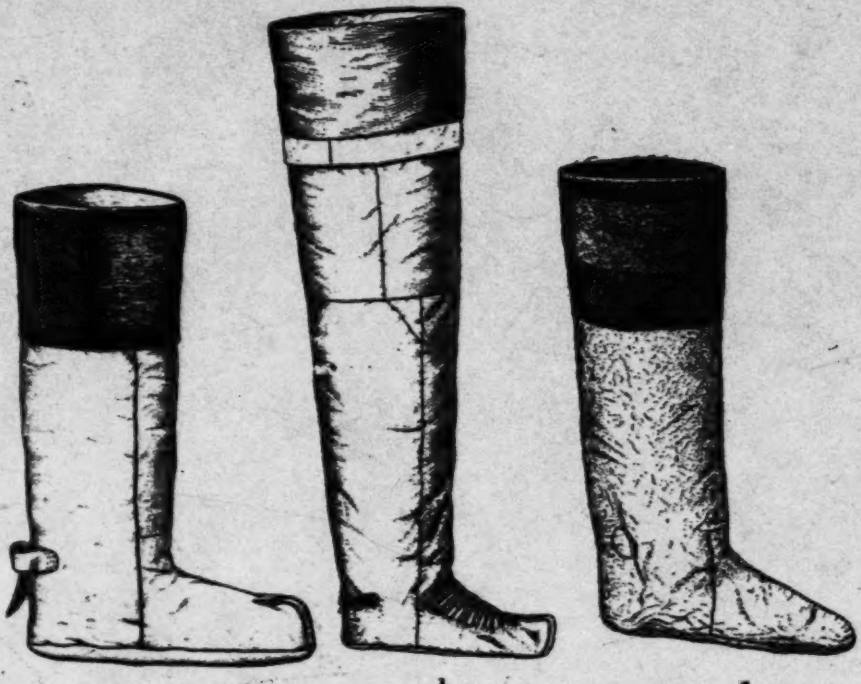

a *b* *c*

Fig. 40 *a–c* (70–8498*b*, 8563*a*, 8721*a*). Yakut Footwear. *a*, Boots of soft dressed elkskin used in winter for horseback riding; *b*, High boots made of dressed and dyed black horsehide; *c*, Stockings of calfskin with the hair on worn by women.

sāry-eterbes is very comfortable and light but loses its shape and waterproof character when used for wading for a long time or to walk in deep snow, since it seems to be adapted especially for riding or climbing. It may be distinguished by its turned up toes.

A boot of soft dressed elkskin made wide enough to wear over fur stockings (*koñulet eterbes*), is used in winter when horseback riding (Fig. 40*a*). A stocking of calfskin (Fig. 40*c*) with the hair side in, is worn

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by women and called *jaxtar kencete* (woman's stocking). Over these stockings are worn hare socks. The legs of the stockings are decorated at the top with red and green cloth. In the summer cloth stockings are worn.

A Yakut girl wearing horseskin boots (*sāry-eterbes*) with silver decorations at the top may be seen in Fig. 41. Leather bands are wound around the ankles.

Before starting on a trip the Yakut lines his boots with dry grass. On his bare legs he wears hare or calfskin stockings with the hair inside: over these he wears low slippers of the same skins with the hair outside; and lastly he pulls on the *sāry-eterbes*. The trouser legs are tucked inside the boots, over which are pulled up the *sotury*, traveling fur knee-protectors, with the fur outside. These are tied lightly around the legs below the knees and their tops are attached to the rings on the trousers, where they reach the groins and cover the hips. Neither wind, snow, nor rain, will penetrate to the undergarments of which the Yakut are particularly careful. Returning from a journey, the Yakut first of all remove the *sotury*. The best *sotury* are made of wolves' legskin; those made of fox, reindeer or mare legskins are inferior.

Fig. 41. A Yakut Girl wearing Boots with Silver Ornaments.

To complete the description of Yakut clothing we add a note on their mittens and boas. Yakut mittens (*ūtūlūk*) always have a division for the thumb. Gloves are called *tarbaxtax ūtūlūk*, mittens with fingers (from *tarbax*, a finger), or *nuca ūtūlūk*, Russian mittens. Yakut mittens are not slit at the wrist; this they regard as a Tungus fashion. Instead of the slit there are often strips of leather from which the mittens hang when working with the bare hands. The Yakut mittens are wider and clumsier than those of the Tungus. Attaching the mittens to the coat sleeves and the use of a wrist protector are also regarded as Tungus styles. When a Yakut hunter goes into the woods in winter to set traps and self-acting bows, to keep the hand warm and soft he wears large double fur mittens, reaching to the elbows.

A woman's mitten may be seen in Fig. 42 (*jaxtar ūtūlūge*). It is made of skins of white fox legs, trimmed at the opening with wolf fur;

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time. Yakut pots are easily broken and remain porous until milk has been repeatedly boiled in them. The rims, the upper part, and sometimes the whole pot, are ornamented by impressions made with wooden stamps (*kūōs oyūlūr mas*, wood for ornamenting pottery). These design motives have special names; for instance, Fig. 53*d*, is called *tyñyrachtach torduya;* Fig. 53*g* is *biltägir.*

Though pottery-making was known to the Yakut since neolithic times it never developed into a real art. This may be explained partly by their early acquaintance with the manufacture of metals, particularly iron, which among the Yakut preceded that of bronze. Clay vessels came to be used more frequently as containers for liquids than as cooking utensils. However, fluids cannot be kept in them a long time without spoiling. After cooking the pot is cleaned with an iron scraper called *kāsīr* (Fig. 48) and dried.

The forms of clay vessels vary; the commonest is an egg-like shape, the flat bottom of which is much smaller than the mouth. As may be seen from the illustration (Fig. 49*a–d*) the tea pots and charcoal stoves (Fig. 49*a*, *c*) to keep them warm are made after the Russian fashion. The size ranges from small cups for children to vessels capable of holding four to six gallons.

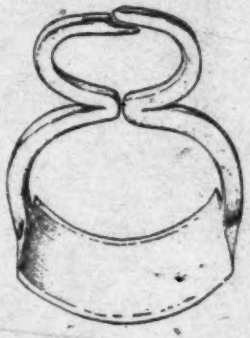

Fig. 48 (70-8775). An Iron Scraper for Clay Cooking Pots.

Additional evidence of the antiquity of the industry among the Yakut appears in the Turkic names for pottery-making implements and vessels. A clay pot is called *küös;* a metal kettle is called *salyr*. Even in places where, as in the northern districts of Yakut Province, no pottery is made at present, the word *kūōs* is well known and used as a linear measure. In terms of linear measure one may say, "one pot," "two pots," "pot of a walker, horse, or ox rider." For *kūōs* (pot) the Yakut understand a distance of from seven to twelve versts (from 6.6 to 8 miles). Translating *kūōs* in terms of time, it means a period during which a pot with meat for an average family is cooked. In Afghanistan *kūōs* is used as a linear measure of about eighteen miles. Böhtlingk[1] distinguishes the word *kūōs* as a unit of time from *kōs* as a linear measure as does Pekarsky in his Yakut-Russian dictionary, where he interprets *kōs* as a term for a day's journey from one camping place to another.

The Yakut do not know how to wash clay or to temper it, using it as it is found, with all its impurities, quartz and other non-plastic materials

[1] Böhtlingk, *ibid.*

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Fig. 49 (70–8894, 8641, 8661, 8586). Pottery Forms. *a* and *c* are forms copied from Russian utensils.

Fig. 50 *a–c* (70–9250, 8641, 9248). Pottery Ornamentation.

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which constitute a natural tempering medium. For this reason Yakut clay lacks uniformity, its quality depending on its incidental composition. 323

In Fig. 49*b* is a tripod clay vessel (*üs ataxtar buor bolčik*) for sour milk. The legs show the tendency to reproduce horse's hoofs as in the wooden kumiss vessels. The decoration of the rim consists of three parallel grooves circling the vessel made by a double notched wooden stamp (*kūōs oyulūr mas*). 531 323

Another form has four rows of ornamental designs around the rim (Fig. 49*d*). In Fig. 51*a–d* may be seen two wooden stamps with which the vessel was decorated. Each design motive forms a single line on the pot. The cross design forms the fourth row and the same motive is put in another position in the first row. This is also true of the second and third rows, where they are sloped in the opposite direction. Two other stamps are carved on the opposite sides of the same stick (Fig. 51*b–c*).

Fig. 51 (70-8593*ab*). Wooden Stamps for decorating Yakut Pottery.

A small clay pot is decorated with repetitions of five design units (Fig. 50*a*). The circles on the rim are like those on the lower row, only smaller. Each of the three inner rows of decoration represents a repetition of the same figure. The figures of the middle rows are so stamped that each design is placed opposite the intervals between designs of the upper and lower rows.

Fig. 50*b* represents a small clay pot with a lid. The decoration consists of circles, discs, and figures resembling the ends of keys with barbs. These motives are enlarged in Fig. 53. Four circles forming a cross are placed below the interval between each second disc.

A small clay pot ornamented with circles and the so-called backbone designs on projecting ridges is shown in Fig. 50*c*. Both designs are also shown enlarged in Fig. 53. The interior of a Yakut winter dwelling illustrated in Fig. 52 shows clay pots on the hearth and a woman smoothing a new pot with a paddle. She holds a wooden ball inside the pot with her left hand to support the wall while the outside is smoothed. Some Yakut potters of the environs of the City of Yakutsk have learned from Russian potters both to add salt to the paste, making the pottery stronger, and also the art of glazing. The handles on the vessels illustrated in Fig. 49*a, c* as well as the spout to the tea pot (Fig. 49*a*) are made in imitation of Russian pottery. 177 323 531

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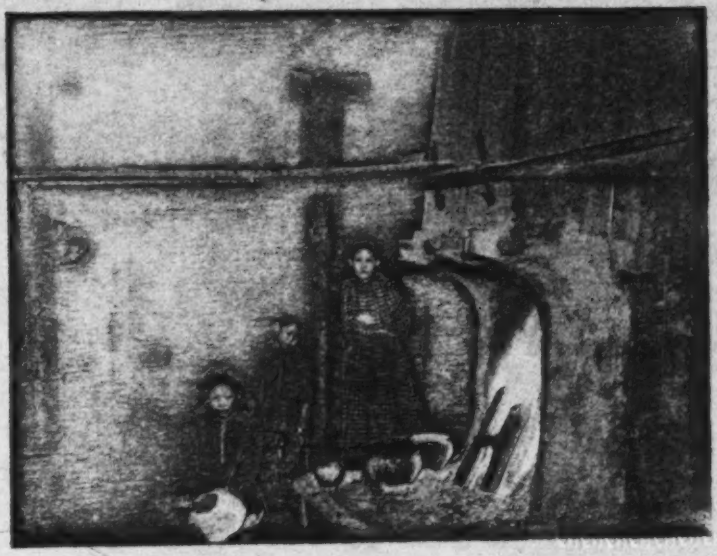

Fig. 52. Interior of a Yakut Winter Dwelling. A potter is at work near the hearth.

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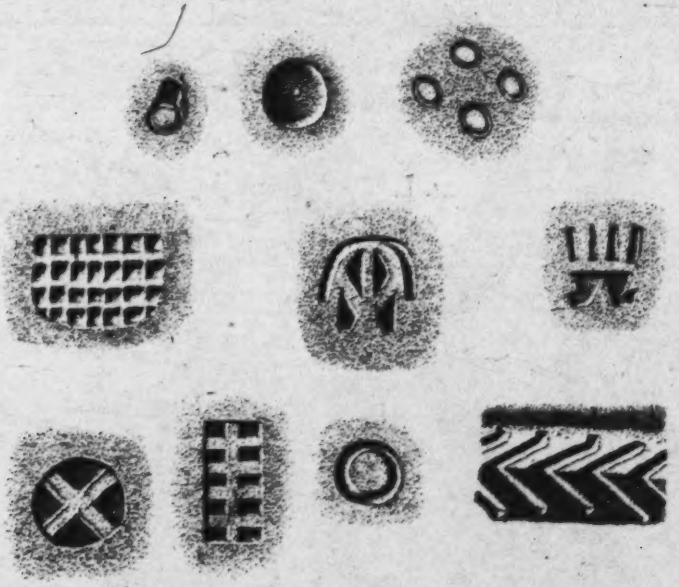

Fig. 53 (70-9249, 9250, 9248). Types of Pottery Designs.

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saying that it looks like copper. Silver plates for saddles are made by smelting a thick plate and hammering it thin. The quality of their silver varies. The best silver objects, the Yakut say, contain 50 per cent of silver, the rest is copper and zinc. The Yakut do not know zinc, but obtain it from imported Russian metallic ware, like latten-brass objects.

Silver Objects. A series of silver bracelets is illustrated in Fig. 61. Fig. 61*cd* is a pair of silver bracelets (*bŏhŏx*), showing the reverse and

Fig. 62 (70-8669, 8670). A Silver Cup and Saucer with engraved Symbolic Representations of Plants.

a *b*

Fig. 63*a*(70-8764), *b*(70-9139). Silver Ornaments. *a*, A decorated silver disc, part of the embellishment for a woman's cap; *b*, A silver belt buckle.

obverse, with the clasp fastened. A child's silver bracelets (*ohoböhöhö*) are engraved with symbolic representation of plants. On the large bracelets (Fig. 61*cd*) is also engraved a zigzag or finger ornament.

A silver cup and saucer, with engraved symbolic representations of plants is illustrated in Fig. 62. Under the upper rim and above the bottom of the cup are circles resembling twisted basketry fiber. The same pattern is repeated on the saucer. Both the cup (*chāsky*) and the saucer (*būlūcha*) are called by distorted Russian names which are

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actually: *chaska* and *bludéchko*, demonstrating that both vessels were adopted from the Russians. On the other hand, all the wooden goblets and other kumiss vessels have genuine Yakut-Turkic names.

Fig. 63*a* is a silver disc (*tusaxta*) used for the decoration of the front of the top of a woman's fur cap. The engraved ornamentation represents

Fig. 64 *a* (70–9165), *b* (70–9139), *c* (70–8519). Riding Gear. *a*, *c*, Whips with silver ornamented handles; *b*, Silver ornamented bridle.

a symbolic plant pattern. In Fig. 63*b* is illustrated a silver belt buckle called *biráskā*, the Yakut version of the Russian word, *pryáshka*. Of interest is the central ornament consisting of connecting curves.

Two whips with handles ornamented in silver and a similarly decorated bridle are illustrated in Fig. 64*a–c*. Whips so decorated are

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usually used by rich women riders. The bridle has reins of soft dressed elk leather and is decorated with many pendants like those in the illustration (Fig. 65).

The front of a saddle (*yñȳr*) ornamented with a silver hook and a silver plate is shown in Fig. 66. The plate of hammered silver is engraved with curvilinear figures and fastened to the wooden frame of the saddle with silver nails. Fig. 67 gives a side view of the same saddle. To the wooden base a feather cushion (*tūnā*) is attached with leather strips. On the cushion are two brass discs called *bātūgūr oyulōx*. Leather side skirts (*kychym*) of dressed elkskin cover the body of the horse and are ornamented with leather tassels and decorated with beads, curved silver and brass figures and discs. It is of interest to note that the stirrups (*isāñā*) are attached to the front of the saddle and that, in comparison with European or American stirrups, they are short, so that the horseman rides with knees bent. In the Yakut collection in the Museum are *kychyms* of cloth embroidered with silk and silver thread. Between the cushion and the *kychym* in Fig. 67 we see three leather saddle girths. These are of ox or elk leather or plaited of horsehair (of the mane or tail). Fig. 68 shows a detached *kychym* decorated with leather tassels, red cloth, and velvet, as well as with silver and lead. Fig. 69 represents a silver saddle hook to which the reins are tied when the horse waits for the rider.

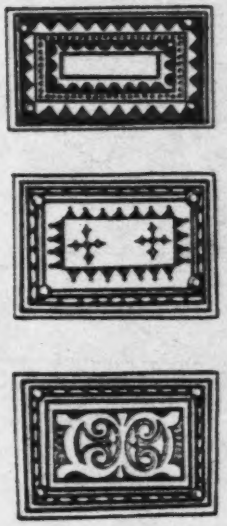

Fig. 65 (70-9139). Silver Ornaments on the Bridle illustrated in Fig. 64*b*.

A curry comb with silver rings (Fig. 70) is attached to the saddle. A mosquito beater (Fig. 71) for a horse rider is made of horsehair from the tail or mane attached to a silver ornamented handle. A completely saddled horse with all the accouterments is illustrated in Fig. 72. A saddle cover (*dōpsō*) of fur, decorated with variously formed and colored strips of the same material is illustrated in Fig. 74.

492 Fig. 73 shows a rich Yakut woman in festive attire with her riding horse fully accoutered, with a cover on the saddle as well as side and hind covers. Women usually like white horses.

Fig. 75 shows a wooden pack saddle (*xañxa*) on a straw cushion (*xañxa bototo*). The straw pad for a riding saddle is called *ynȳr bototo*.

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Fig. 66 (70-9136). The Front of a Saddle (See Fig. 67) ornamented with Engraved and Hammered Silver.

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spirits. Even representations of the horse, which is regarded as a benevolent being and almost worshiped, are avoided. Only the shaman's dress may be decorated with figures of men and animals which represent his guardians and benevolent and evil spirits (pp. 107–118).

Fig. 82 (70-9367). An Ivory Carving depicting a Man on Snowshoes.

Fig. 83 (70-8799, 8916). Wood Carvings representing a Lamp on a Stand and a Saddled Horse.

Professor Boas has called attention to the difference between the realistic decoration of ceremonial objects and the geometrical designs on those in common use among the Indians and Eskimo.[1] This differentiation is applicable to Yakut art.

[1]Boas, Franz, The Decorative Art of the North American Indian (*Popular Science Monthly*, vol. 63, pp. 481–498, 1903).

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We present here some additional examples of Yakut carving in the Museum collection to show the crudity and rigidity of the execution of human and animal figures in bone or mammoth tusks despite the fact that the carvings were made by Yakut living near Yakutsk in imitation of Russian carvings and to meet the demands of Russians.

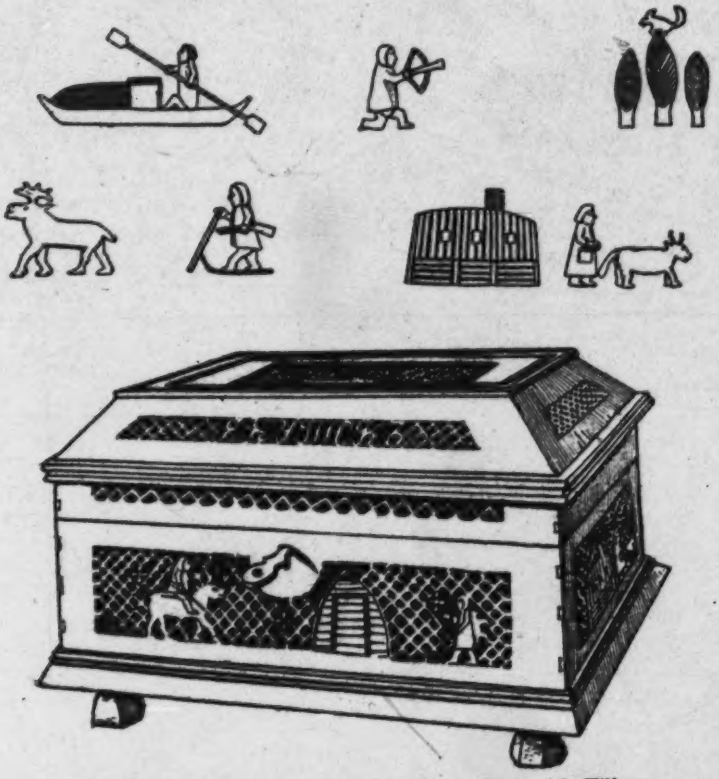

Fig. 84 (70-9382). A Mammoth Ivory Box with Filigree Carving and some Details of the Figures carved on the Opposite Side.

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A box of mammoth ivory ornamented in filigree is shown in Fig. 84. On the front is depicted a Tungus riding a reindeer, a conical tent with its entrance door, and a hunter afoot carrying his staff and a dead fox on his back. Fig. 84 reproduces the figures carved on the other three sides of the box: a man paddling a boat with a covered place for passengers; an elk; a hunter on snowshoes carrying a staff and

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gun; a man kneeling with drawn bow; three firs with a squirrel on the top of the middle one; a Yakut earth hut; a woman with a pail going to milk a cow. A comb of mammoth ivory ornamented in filigree and an ivory ear pick may be seen in Fig. 85. All other ornamentation

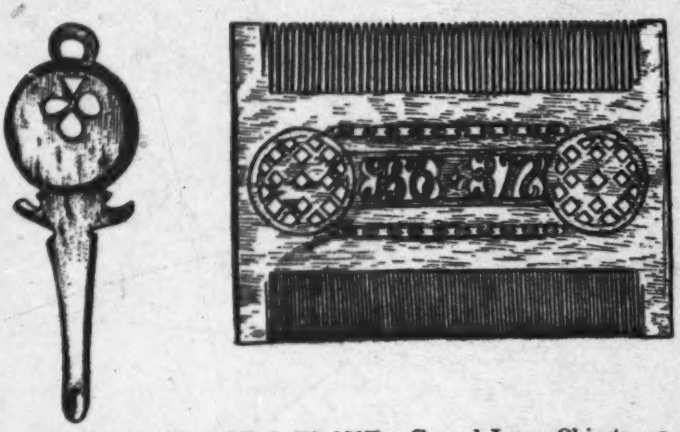

Fig. 85 *a* (70-9088), *b* (70-9097). Carved Ivory Objects. *a*, An ear pick; *b*, A comb of mammoth ivory with filigree decoration.

Fig. 86 (70-8689). Bone Goblet.

of wood or bone objects consists of geometric, skewomorphic, and conventionalized designs. Only the legs or bases of large wooden kumiss goblets realistically represent horses' legs and hoofs. To show the great variety of non-realistic decorative design motives we will analyze the decoration of goblets and other vessels used in kumiss festivals.

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The following paints are used by the Yakut for technical purposes.

1. Black paint prepared from the excrescence (chalk stone?) on a horse's tail, which the Yakut call *xoruoncuka* or *xaryancyka*. Women's decorated wooden boxes for sewing material, tools and ornaments, are covered with this paint.

2. A decoction of larch bark produces red and cinnamon colored paints for coloring horsehair (from the mane or tail) which is kept for a while in the boiling decoction. Such painted hair is used for plaiting saddle girths and bridles, which are made in three colors: white, black, and red.

3. Black paint is prepared from the agaric (*yt munna*, a dog's nose) on a birch tree. It is charred, reduced to powder and mixed with blood of animals, thus producing a nice black paint.

4. Blood. Ox-leather soaked in blood becomes black and waterproof. From such leather are prepared containers (sacks) for kumiss and sour milk.

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Fig. 88. Circle Dance, a Part of the Kumiss Festival.

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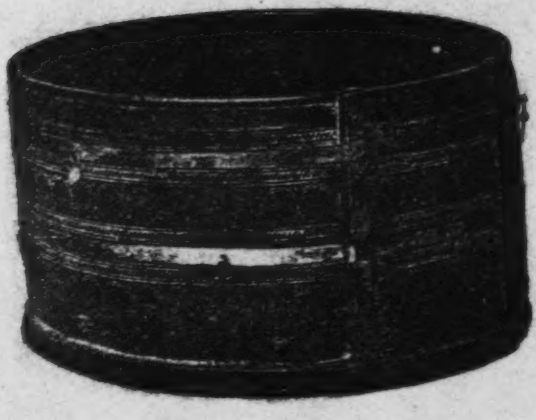

Fig. 89 (70-8613). Cylindrical Wooden Vessel used in the Kumiss Festival.

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dramatized in a contest between two men. One, dressed in white, represented spring, and was called "son of creator" (*ayi uola*); the other, clad in black, represented winter, and was called "son of evil spirit" (*abasy uola*).

The autumnal festival was celebrated in honor of the destructive forces and was therefore called *abasy-ysyax*. It was dedicated to the evil spirits (*abasylar*), the inhabitants of the west and the representatives of darkness and night, in order that they may not interfere with them in winter, when starvation, disease, and death are imminent. This festival also took place in the open air, but at night.

The first night, the ceremony was in honor of Big-Lord (*Ulu-Toyon*) and the evil spirits of the upper world subordinate to him. The ceremony of the second night was in honor of *Axsan Duolai* and his subordinates, the evil spirits of the lower world. To all of these evil spirits, in addition to the libations of kumiss made to the benevolent deities, blood sacrifices of cattle and horses were also made. This ceremony was superintended by nine male and nine female shamans.

Kumiss Vessels and their Decorations

Kumiss vessels may be divided into three types, according to form:—

1. The *corōn*, a very large urn-shaped goblet with a small base holding from ten to fifteen liters of kumiss. Their small bases make them unstable. To drink from them, they must be held with both hands. Three large goblets of varying sizes are reproduced in Fig. 91. Two of them, in addition to the engraved decorations, are ornamented with silver hoops and pendants and one with pendants of red cloth and hair from a horse's mane.

2. *Us ataxtāx corōn*, i.e., tripod goblets of smaller size are illustrated in Fig. 90. Fig. 90a is ornamented with silver rings.

3. Cylindrical vessels with set-in bottoms of varying sizes, and named according to their size, the small one, *mācax;* and the large ones, *ymyja*.

All these drinking vessels are made from the strong, tough wood of the polar birch tree. The first two types are carved and hollowed from one piece. Formerly the adze was the implement used for hollowing but recently a chisel. The finish, polish, and decoration are accomplished with knives only. The sides of these goblets are made very thin and they easily crack when drying. A goblet left empty in the sun for a single day is sure to crack. To guard against injury, they are kept in a dark, damp place, and are also freely oiled with melted butter, which gives them a

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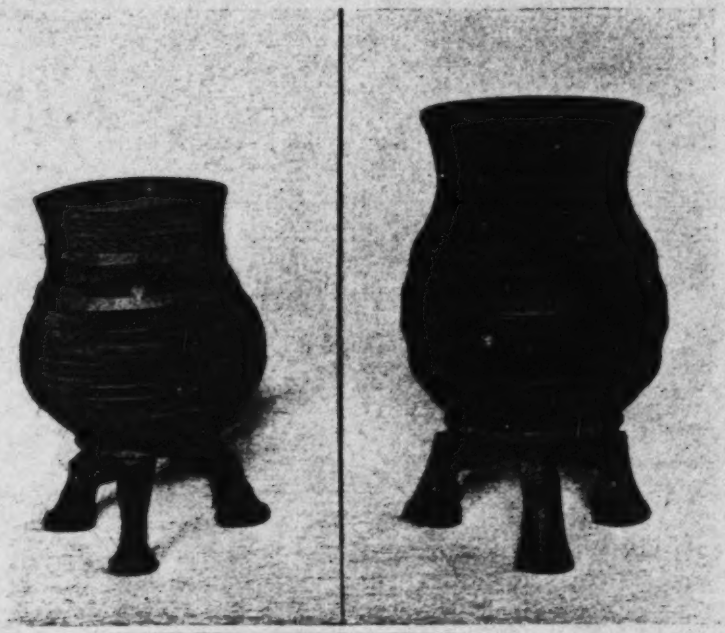


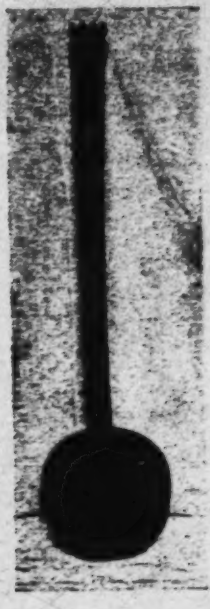
Fig. 90 *a* (70-8655), *b* (70-9205), *c* (70-8656). Wooden Tripod Goblets used in the Kumiss Festival.

Fig. 91 *a* (70-9060), *b* (70-9206). Wooden Goblets for Kumiss.

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

dark brown polish. The large kumiss ladles are also oiled for the same reason. Fig. 92 *a–c* illustrates such a ladle and the engravings at the end and the middle of the handle.

The decorative patterns on kumiss vessels are possibly as old as the religion with which they are connected. In them we find no Central Asiatic or Chinese decorative motives of the more advanced periods of



a

b

c

Fig. 92 *a–c* (60-8781). Large Wooden Kumiss Ladle used to fill the Drinking Goblets and Vessels from the Skin Barrel. *b–c*, Details of engravings at the end and middle of the ladle handle.

Asiatic culture; but we do find such decorative motives, consisting of complicated curves, spirals, coils, conventionalized plants and animals on their clothing, saddles, and silverware. The ornamentation of the kumiss vessels consists almost exclusively of geometrical figures which, judging from their native names, represent, in more or less conventionalised form, implements or other household objects.

Fig. 93 presents a series of patterns which occur most frequently on the kumiss vessels.

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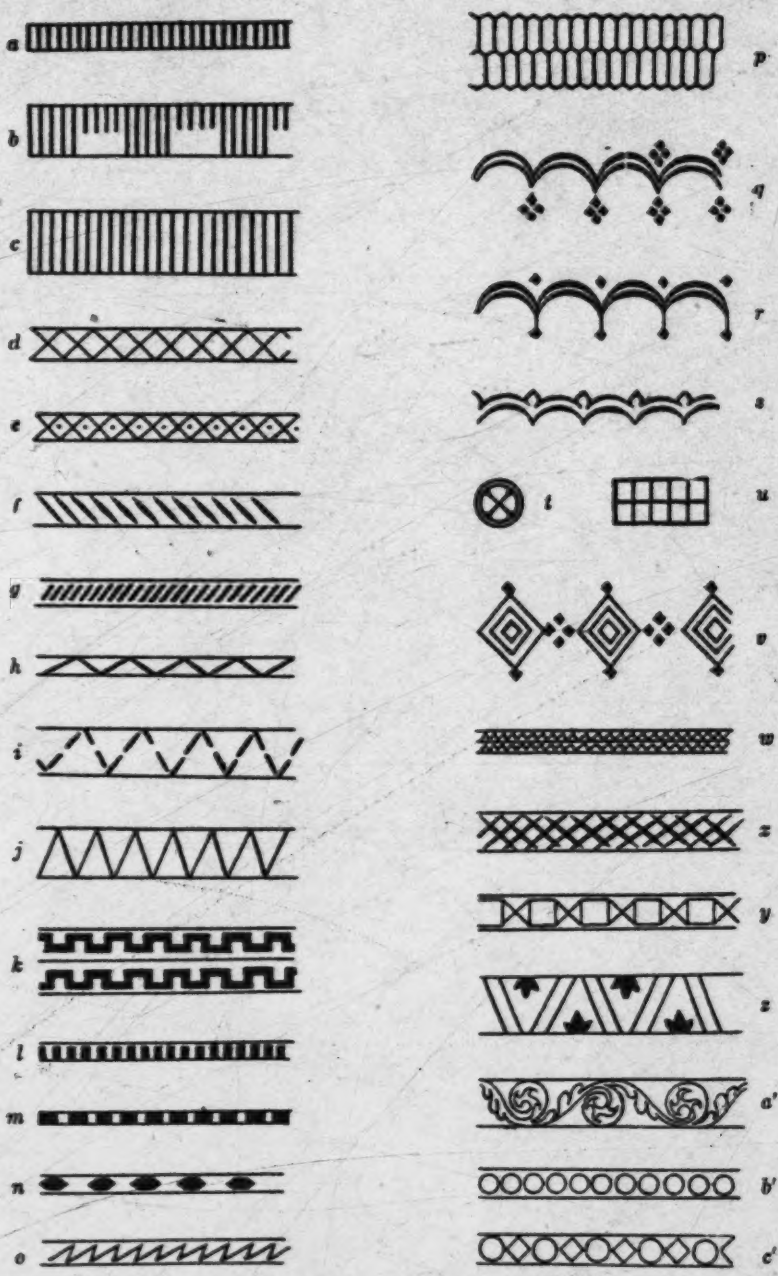

Fig. 93. Designs carved on Kumiss Vessels.

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

Figs. 93*a–c* are called *tarāx oyū*, that is, comb ornament, and represent combs. 415 531

Figs. 93*d–e*, are called *ilim xaraha oyū*, that is, net's eyes ornament. They represent fish nets. The dots in Fig. 93*e* stand, most probably, for fish caught.

Figs. 93*f–g*, are called *āriyā oyū*, that is, wound ornament (from the verb *ārii*, to wind). They represent the weaving of baskets by winding thread around bunches of grass. The same rope-pattern on the birch-bark bucket, Fig. 99, which was made by winding horsehair thread round the hoop of the bucket, is called *āriyā tigi*, which means "twisted sewing."

Figs. 93*h–j* are called *urasa oyū*, that is, tent ornament. These zigzag patterns represent the large conical birchbark summer tents of the Yakut. The same pattern embroidered in thread or sinew on skin bags is called *urasaly tigī*, that is, tent embroidery.

Fig. 93*n* is called *kybytya oyū*, that is, wedge ornament (from the verb *kybyt*, to force in), and represents a wooden wedge for splitting wood.

Fig. 93*v* is called *timāx tördō oyū*, which means button-base ornament. This pattern, consisting of a series of three or four inscribed diamonds, used to be embroidered on the old-time clothing of the Yakut, at the places where the buttons were sewed on.

Fig. 93*w* is called *kārdis oyū*, that is, notched ornament, and represents the primitive Yakut writing by means of notches on sticks.

Figs. 93*b'–c'* are called *kohuor oyū*, that is, kumiss skin bag ornament, and represent large hide kumiss vessels.

It is of interest to note that all the patterns so far mentioned are of a purely decorative character, have no connection with religious ideas, and consist not alone of the simple units but of their highly harmonious and extremely symmetrical repetition.

Neither in the engraving and carving on the wooden kumiss vessels, nor in the embroidery on the leather and birchbark containers, do we find any realistic representation of animals or objects. Realistic art was evidently unknown in the past. The old-time Yakut considered it a sin for any one except shamans to carve human figures from wood. The shamans carve these figures roughly of wood, to represent guardians or evil spirits, for use in religious ceremonies, and they are not regarded as harmless to ordinary folk. I saw figures of cows and horses carved from wood or birchbark, to be used by children as playthings, but there were never any dolls. Some Yakut, living not far from the Russian town of Yakutsk, carve, among other things, human figures from ivory; but I consider this to be a rather inartistic imitation of the carvings of the neighboring tribes. 532 787 [177]

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

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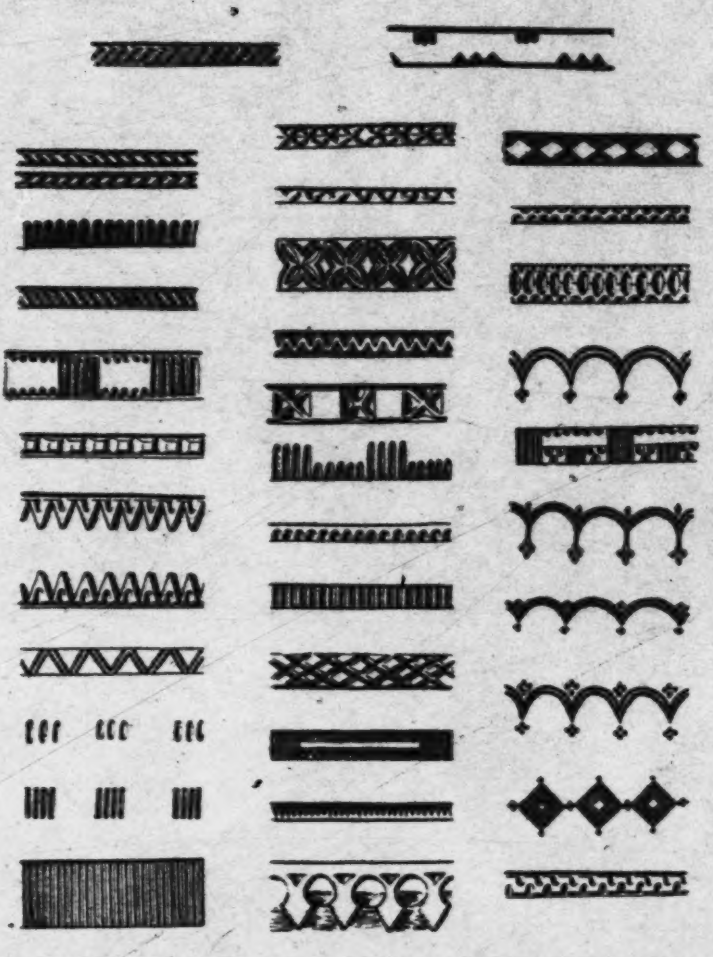

Fig. 94. Relief Carvings on Various Kumiss Vessels. The majority are variants of motives given in Fig. 93.

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

consider this to be a rather inartistic imitation of the carvings of the neighboring tribes.

The only attempt at realistic reproduction in the ornamentation of kumiss vessels is to be found in the carving of horses' hoofs. Thus the bases of the tripod goblets (Fig. 90) are often carved in the shape of horses' hoofs. The mouthpiece of the kumiss churning vessel often has the form of a horse's hoof (Fig. 95*b*). The base of a wooden stand for a

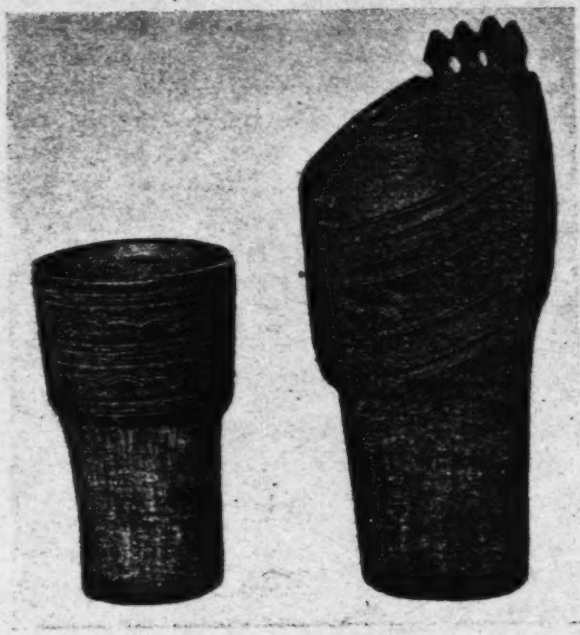

Fig. 95 *a* (70-9067), *b* (70-9266). Two Wooden Funnels for Kumiss Churns.

leather kumiss churn is also in the form of horses' hoofs (see Fig. 96). Even in conventionalized form we do not find the representation of an animal or human figure, not even that of a horse, which forms an object of their animal cult; but, judging from the Yakut names, we do meet with conventionalized representations of parts of the human body.

Thus Fig. 93*l* is called *tonohos oyū*, that is, vertebral ornament, and represents the spine or neck vertebra.

Fig. 93*o* is called *tyñyrax oyū*, which means nail ornament and represents human nails. Fig. 93*p*, is called *Tarbax oyū* which is finger

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

415 ornament, and is a conventionalization of the human finger. On birch-
●531 bark vessels we find the same motive embroidered in horsehair (see Fig.
323 98), and it is then called *tarhaxtÿ tigi*, which means finger embroidery. Among other birchbark techniques, Fig. 98*a–e* also shows the finger

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Fig. 96 (70-9267). A Kumiss Churn on a Wooden Stand.

531 embroidery. It is likely that the nail and finger ornaments originated in
415 work in pottery which is still preserved in a very primitive form.
323 Fig. 93*u* is an ornament copied by me from a Yakut clay pot, and is called *tyñyraxtax torduya*, which means nail-raising. But this pattern is

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

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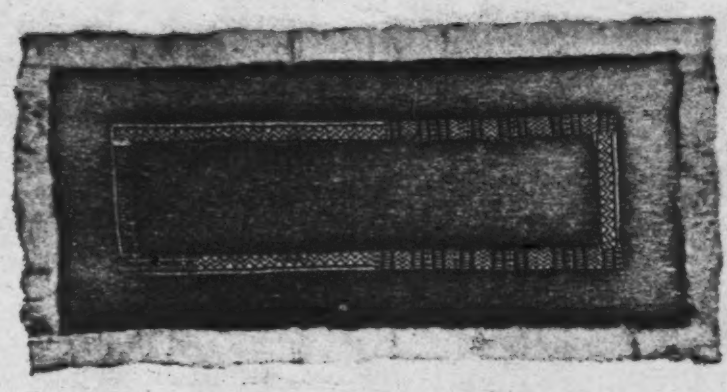
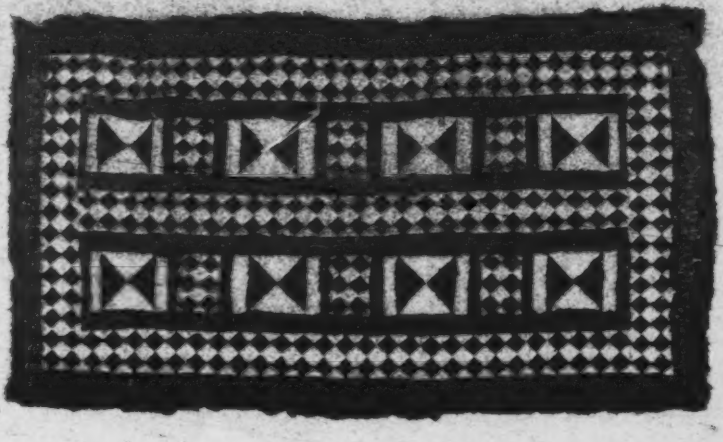


a



b

Fig. 97 *a* (70–9055), *b* (70–8929). Decorated Fur Rugs. *a*, Of cow, horse and coltskin; *b*, Of cow and horseskin.

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

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impressed in the soft clay not with the nail, but with a wooden stamp called *kūōs oyūlūr mas*, meaning a stick (*mas*) for the ornamentation of clay pots (*kūōs*): Fig. 93*t* is also stamped on clay pots and is called *būltāghir torduya*, which means "rounded raising," but this pattern is also found on kumiss vessels.

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There can also be found on kumiss vessels a pattern unillustrated called *tañalai oyū* (palate-ornament). It consists of small curves which represent the arch of the palate. It should be added that under this

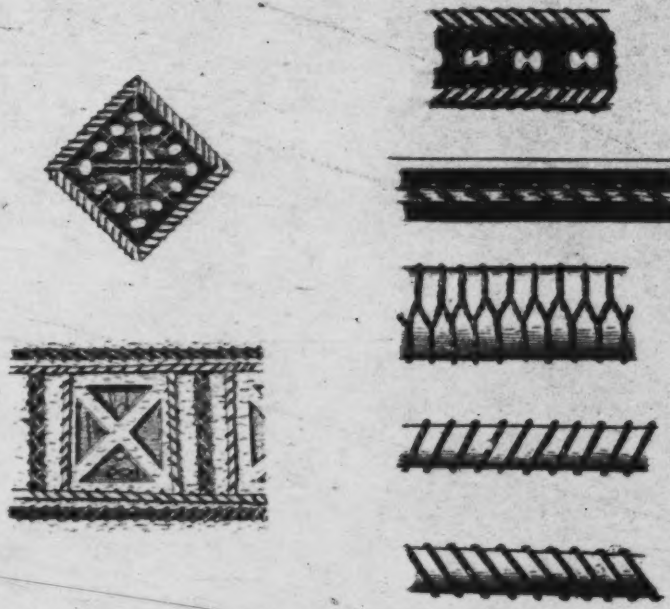

Fig. 98. Details of Embroidery and Sewing on Birchbark Vessels.

name (or *oncoho tañalai oyū*) is also known the decoration on small fur rugs made of alternating stripes of white and black horses' skins. (Fig. 97).

Figs. 93*q–s* are often seen engraved in or embroidered on kumiss vessels. They are called *sarbyn'n'ax oyū* (hanging ornament). This pattern is made with the concave face turned either downwards or upwards. In the first case it represents the hanging arch of the sky; in the second, a rope hung by its two ends. In a form similar to the latter it is also found on Western European Neolithic clay pots and was named *Schnurgehänge* by the German archaeologists, which name coincides with that of the Yakut.

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

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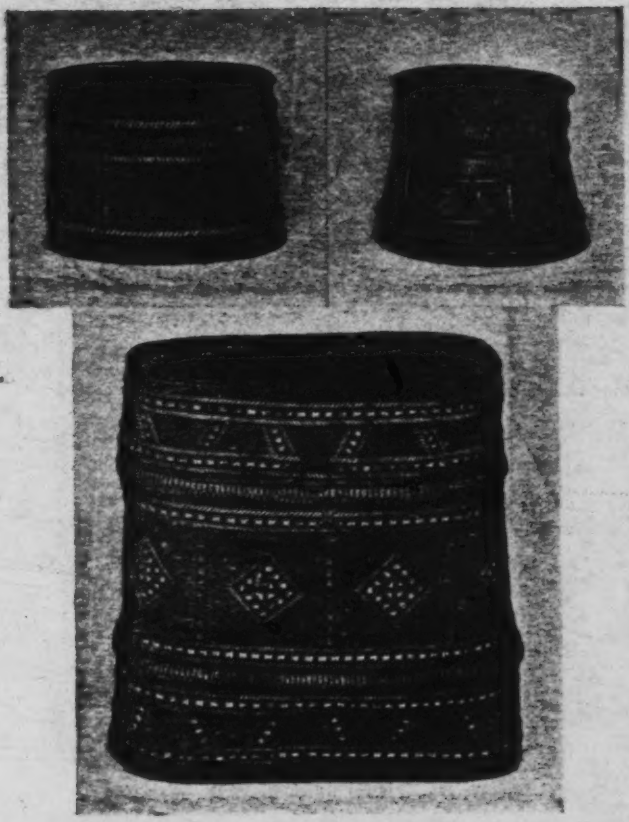

Fig. 99 *a–c* (70–8619,9058,8807). Birchbark Boxes. *a* and *b*, Women's trinket boxes in which sewing materials and other implements are stored; *c*, A storage box for fur caps, boas, mittens, silver ornaments, and other treasured possessions.

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

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Fig. 100 (70–8862). Birchbark Kumiss Bucket with "Finger-Embroidery."

Fig. 101

Fig. 102

Fig. 101 (70–9065). A Cross Design on a Kumiss Churn Stick.

Fig. 102 (70–9206, 9260, 9060, 8713, 8884, 8869). Figures in Relief engraved on Kumiss Goblets. The motives represent conventionalized plants, vertebral ornaments, net ornaments, and a cross.

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

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177

The kumiss goblets are usually decorated by engraving the pattern on the even surface of the vessel. But we also find patterns carved in relief; for instance, the net motive previously mentioned may be found in relief on the goblets shown in Fig. 91. Some patterns in relief (see Fig. 93k) have a common name, *tomtorgo oyū*, meaning simply relief ornament, and referring only to the style of carving, and not to the pattern meaning.

Figs. 93*z*–*a'*, which include conventionalized plants, are called *usuor oyū*. The word *usuor* is borrowed from the Russian word *uzor* (in Polish *wzor*), which means pattern. The patterns too are evidently borrowed from Russian decorative motives.

In the same way, judging from the names, the linear ornaments of Fig. 93*x*–*y*—the first called *duobat oyū*, and the second *saxymat oyū*—must be regarded as borrowed from the Russian. *Duobat* is the old Russian word *doved* (at present *shashka*), which means the game of draughts; and *saxymat*, which is the Russian word *shakhmat*, means chess.

10: Bush--299 [2] T-3 (1865-67) 1871 Yakut
116, 306, 321, 531

"They possess considerable intelligence, and display much acuteness in bargaining, but are particularly remarkable for their ingenuity in manufacturing jewelry, trinkets, and metal-work of all kinds, and in carving ivory after the manner of the Chinese and Japanese. Some of their designs are very beautiful."

17: Erman--300-301 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 177, 412, 301, 174, 531

"Long before the Russians came here, the other tribes of Yakuts got from those at Vilui iron axes, awls, and tools for stripping and dressing the hides; together with copper ornaments for their clothes and harness and the metal plates which they, like the Ostyaks, sew on their girdles. But even now when they [301] make use of European guns, every man among them still exercises the skill peculiar to the nation, in making the great knife, or dagger, which is carried under the sanayakh at the waistband. The Yakutian steel is easily distinguished from the Russian, by its being somewhat flexible; and yet blades made of it will cut copper and pewter as easily as the best European blades. The wooden handle of the knife is always ornamented, after the original fashion, with tin work; from which it is evident that they procured the materials from Nerchinsk, before the Russians knew any thing of the metals in that quarter. They cut figures in the wood, and cast the tin into the hollow; a large knob of the metal left at the top of the knife-handle, is then shaped with the chisel. The sheaths of these Yakutian daggers are made of birch bark, and covered with black leather, on which, again, are metal mountings, with straight-lined patterns engraved on them. I had occasion, once before, to mention some decisive proofs of the influence which the Siberians of the furtherst north exercised on the civilizations of the Yakuts. Here, on the other hand, certain handicrafts, characteristic of nomadic life, and, above all, the art of working metals, evidently point to a connexion with the tribes at present inhabiting the southern steppes and mountains. The physical character, also, and language of the Yakuts decide in favour of the same view."

39: Jochelson E-5 (1888-97) 1906 Yakut

quantity of cold water which has been previously boiled; and the mixture is put into an ox-hide bag or churning-vessel called *simir* (Plate XVIII, Fig. 4), and some of the above-mentioned ferment is added to it. The only use of the water is to increase the quantity; so that when a strong kumiss is desired, less water is added to the milk. The churning-bag is made of ox-hide which has been soaked in blood. This gives it a black color, and also makes it water-tight. For the latter purpose it is also smeared, particularly the seams of its sides, with melted butter. It is ornamented with beads of different colors and with brass or silver pendants.

Before the preparation of kumiss, the churn is placed on a low stool (called *simir oloho*) not far from the fireplace (Plate XIX, Fig. 3), and is hung by a long ornamented ribbon, which passes through brass rings at the neck of the vessel, to one of the middle posts of the house. This is done in order that the churning-bag, when softened by the fluid contained in it, shall not drop down. The ribbon is of black and white horsehair twisted, and is ornamented with leather tassels. In the mouth of the churn is a hollow wooden mouthpiece called *köñkölöi* ("hollowed through," from *köñdöi*, "hollowed"), through which the churning-stick (*xamsatar*, from the verb *xamsat*, "to stir") passes into the churning-vessel (Plate XVIII, Figs. 1, 4; Plate XIX, Figs. 1, 2). Both the mouthpiece and the churning-stick are ornamented with engravings, and brass or silver rings and pendants. The churning-stick is usually in the shape of a horse's hoof. The process of churning lasts from a day and a half to two days, and the women and children often assist in it. The kumiss is then poured into hide or birch-bark barrels, and is ready for use. Such kumiss has an agreeable acid taste, and contains but very little alcohol. The Yakut have no bottles in which to store their kumiss, but when travelling they put it into skin bags of the same shape as the churning-vessels. The opening of the bag is closed by two small sticks tied together at their ends. The bags are placed on the riding or pack horses like saddle-bags. They thus form skin bottles, in which the fermentation continues working out the alcoholic qualities, and the kumiss becomes a strong and heady drink.

1 2 3 4

KUMISS GOBLETS OF THE YAKUT.

39: Jochelson E-5 (1888-97) 1906 Yakut

facing A 266

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39: Jochelson E-5 (1888-97) 1906 Yakut

796 273 415 chansky,[1] is superintended by nine male and nine female shamans.

The kumiss vessels may be divided into three types, according to their shape:—

1. The *corōn*, an urn-shaped goblet (Plate XXI) with a small foot. These goblets are usually of a very large size, and hold from ten to fifteen litres of kumiss. Their small bases make them unstable. In drinking from them, they are held with both hands.

2. Three-legged goblets, of smaller size (Plate XXII, Fig. 2), called *ūs ataxtāx corōn*.

3. Cylindrical vessels with let-in bottoms, of varying sizes, and named according to their size,—the small ones, *mārcax;* and the large ones, *ymyya* (Plate XXII, Figs. 1, 3).

415 322 All these drinking-vessels are made from the strong, tough wood of the polar birch-tree. The first two types are carved and hollowed from one piece. Formerly the hollowing-out was done with an adze, but later with the help of a chisel. The finish, polish, and decorative work are done with knives only. The sides of these goblets are made very thin, and they easily crack on drying. A goblet left empty in the sun for a single day is sure to crack. To guard against injury, they are kept in a dark, damp place, and are, besides, freely oiled with melted butter. The oiling causes the goblets to take on the appearance of dark-brown polished vessels. For the same reason, the large kumiss ladles are also oiled (see Plate XVIII, Fig. 2).

415 531 The decorative patterns on these vessels are possibly as old as the religion with which the vessels are connected. On them we do not find any Central-Asiatic or Chinese decorative motives of the more advanced periods of Asiatic culture; but we do find such decorative motives—consisting of complicated curves, spirals, coils, conventionalized plants and animals—on the clothing, saddles, and silverware of the Yakut. The ornaments on the kumiss vessels consist almost exclusively of geometrical figures, which, judging by their native names, repre-

[1] In one of the Yakut legends recorded by Khudyakoff it is related, that, at a festival in celebration of a marriage, there were present nine male and eight female shamans.

39: Jochelson E-5 (1888-97) 1906 Yakut

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sent, in more or less conventionalized form, implements or other household objects. Fig. 8 shows the patterns which occur most frequently on the kumiss vessels.

Nos. 1–3 are called *tarāx oyū*, that is, "comb-ornament," and represent combs.

Nos. 4, 5, are called *ilim xaraha oyū*, that is, "net's eyes ornament." They represent fish-nets. The dots in No. 5 stand, most probably, for caught fish.

Nos. 6, 7, are called *āriyā oyū*, that is, "wound ornament" (from the verb *ārii*, "to wind"). They represent the weaving of baskets by winding thread around bunches of grass. The same rope-pattern on the birch-bark bucket on Plate XXII, Fig. 4, which was made by winding horsehair thread round the hoop of the bucket, is called *āriyā tigī*, which means "twisted sewing."

Nos. 8–10 are called *urasa oyū*, that is, "hut-ornament." These zigzag patterns represent the ancient conical summer houses of the Yakut. The same patterns embroidered in thread on skin bags (No. 9) are called *urasalɣ tigī*, that is, "hut-embroidery."

No. 14 is called *kybɣtya oyū*, that is, "wedge-ornament" (from the verb *kybɣt*, "to force in"), and represents a wooden wedge for splitting wood.

No. 22 is called *timäx tōrdō oyū*, which means "button-base ornament." This pattern, consisting of a series of three or four inscribed diamonds, used to be embroidered on the old-time clothing of the Yakut, at the places where the buttons used to be sewed on.

No. 23 is called *kārdis oyū*, that is, "notched ornament," and represents the primitive writing of the Yakut by means of notches on sticks.

Nos. 28, 29, are called *tonohos oyū*, that is, "kumiss skin-bag ornament," and represent large kumiss vessels of hide.

It is of interest to note that all the decorative patterns so far mentioned are of a purely decorative character, and have no connection with religious ideas. This decorative character consists, not in the simple units, but in the highly harmonious and extremely symmetrical repetition of them.

39: Jochelson E-5 (1888-97) 1906 Yakut

Neither in the engraving and carving on the wooden kumiss vessels, nor in the embroidery on the leather and birch-bark vessels, do we find any realistic representation of animals or objects. Realistic art was evidently not known to the Yakut in the past. SĀROSHEVSKI remarks that the old-time Yakut considered it a sin for any one except shamans to carve human figures from wood. The shamans carve these roughly of wood, which represent "guardians" or evil spirits, for use in religious ceremonies, and they are not regarded as harmless to ordinary folk. I saw figures of cows and horses carved from wood or birch-bark, to be used by children as playthings, but there were never any dolls among them. Some Yakut living not far from the Russian town of Yakutsk carve from ivory, among other things human figures; but I consider this to be a rather inartistic imitation of the carvings of neighboring tribes.

The only attempt at realistic reproduction in the ornamentation of kumiss vessels is to be found in the carving of horses' hoofs. Thus the feet of the three-legged goblets are often carved in the shape of horses' hoofs (Plate XXII, Fig. 2). The mouthpiece of the kumiss churning-vessel likewise often has the form of a horse's hoof. Even in a conventionalized form we do not find the representation of an animal or human figure, not even that of the horse, which forms an object of their animal cult; but, judging from the Yakut names, we do meet with conventionalized representations of parts of the human body.

Thus No. 13 (Fig. 8) is called *tonohos oyū*, that is, "vertebral ornament," and represents the spine or neck vertebra.

No. 15 is called *tyñyrax oyū*, which means "nail-ornament," and represents human nails.

No. 16 is called *tarbax oyū*, which is "finger-ornament," and is a conventionalization of the human finger. On birch-bark vessels we find the same ornament embroidered in horsehair (Plate XXII, Fig. 4), and it is then called *tarbaxtȳ tigi*, which means "finger-embroidery."

39: Jochelson E-5 (1888-97) 1906 Yakut

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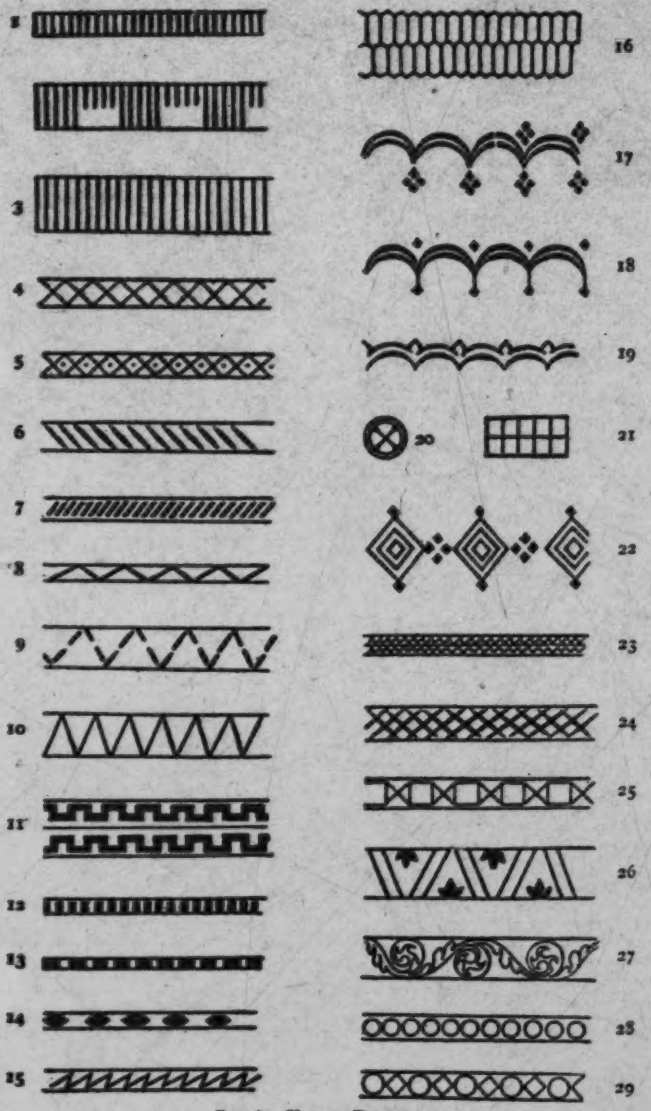

FIG. 8. YAKUT DESIGNS.

39: Jochelson E-5 (1888-97) 1906 Yakut

It is likely that the "nail" and the "finger" ornaments originated from the Yakut pottery-work, which is still preserved in a very primitive form.[1]

No. 21 is an ornament copied by me from a Yakut clay pot, and is called *tyŋyraxmăx torduya*, which means "nail-raising." But this pattern is impressed in the soft clay, not with the nail, but with a wooden stamp named *küös oyŭlŭr mas*, meaning "a stick [*mas*] for the ornamentation of clay pots [*küös*]."

No. 20 is also stamped on clay pots, and is called *bŭltăghir torduya*, which means "rounded raising," but this pattern is also found on kumiss vessels.

There can also be found on kumiss vessels a pattern, not here illustrated, called *tañalai oyŭ* ("palate-ornament"). It consists of small curves which represent the arch of the palate.

Nos. 17–19 are often seen engraved in or embroidered on kumiss vessels. They are called *sarbya'n'ax oyŭ* ("hanging ornament"). This pattern is made with the concave face turned either downwards or upwards. In the first case it represents the hanging arch of the sky; in the second, a rope hung up by the two ends. In a form similar to the latter it is also found on the clay pots of the neolithic age of western Europe, and was named *Schnurgehänge* by the German archæologists, which name coincides with the Yakut one.

The decorative work on the kumiss goblets is usually made by engraving the patterns on the even surface of the vessel. But we also find patterns carved in relief; for instance, the net-ornament mentioned before is in relief on the goblets on Plate XXI. Some patterns made in relief (see Nos. 11, 12, Fig. 8) have a common name, *tomtorgo oyŭ*, which means simply "relief ornaments," and which refers only to the style of carving, and not to the meaning of the pattern.

Nos. 26, 27, which include conventionalized plants, are called *usuor oyŭ*. The word *usuor* is borrowed from the Russian word *uzor* (in Polish *wzor*), which means "pattern." The patterns too are evidently borrowed from Russian decorative motives.

[1] A short description of Yakut pottery will be given in my work on the Koryak (Jesup Expedition Publications, Vol. VI).

39: Jochelson E-5 (1888-97) 1906 Yakut

In the same way, judging by the names, the lineal ornaments of Nos. 24, 25,—the first called *duobat oyū*, and the second *saxymat oyū*,—must be regarded as borrowed from the Russians. *Duobat* is the old Russian word *doved*, which means the game of draughts; and *saxymat*, which is the Russian word *shachmat*, means "chess."

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45: Lesseps--315-316 T-2 (1788) 1790 Yakut
116, 342, 531

" Like the yourts of the wandering Koriacs, they [RCH: Yakut yourts] are circular, spacious, and constructed with poles, fewer in number, but ranged in the same manner, and kept asunder by a sort of hoops at the top; the whole covered in with the bark of the birch tree (1), formed into pieces eighteen inches wide, placed

1. The bark of this tree is stripped off in the spring.

in a downward direction. These pieces are edged with a kind of ribband equally made of this bark, and shaped into festoons, and the inside of the yourt is orna- [316] mented in the same manner. The taste of these ornaments is governed bu the caprice of the proprietor, and there is in them a sort of wildness that is sufficiently amusing. The same decoration is annexed to the chairs and beds of the heads of families. The domestic lie upon the ground on mats or skins, and the fire is lighted in the middle of the house."

49: Findeisen -- 9-10 E-1 (no date) 1930 Yakut
116, 101, 174, 197, 531

There is less known about Yakut history than about Buryat history. We only know in general that the Yakuts had their originary domiciles in southern regions; but there is no indication as to where this area is to be sought, and in what time the migration has to be put. The usual assumption is that the Yakuts left the Baikal lake area in the Mongolic era, i. e., in the 13th century, to go northward. There are, however, reasons against this hypotheses, especially the fact that there is not tradition on Gengis-khan among the Yakuts, unlike e. g., the Northern Buryats. That the Yakuts come from southern regions cannot be doubted. Aside from the numerous Yakut sagas on their migration, it may also be concluded from their ornamental art. The 'ram horn' ornament has so far especially aroused the interest of occasional investigators, though Yakut art includes other much more surprising elements, which will be more fully treated by this writer in a paper to be published before long. The question cannot here be insisted upon. -- That the Yakuts are a mixed people, is clear from their vocabulary [10], which includes 32. 5% Turkish, 25. 9% Mongolic and 41% non-Turkish and non-Mongolic elements. The Yakuts are probably a partly Mongolized Turkish tribe, which had been pushed northward in early times.

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

[p.253]

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Birchbark box. Embroidered with beads and horsehair.

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

224 aquatic and forest birds-duck, partridge, hazel-grouse, and so on. In the northern regions, the Yakuts engaged, and still engage far more in hunting; for the Yakuts from these regions, just as for the Evenks, Evens, and Yukagirs, hunting is at times the chief means of subsistence. There, they chiefly hunt blue fox, hare, wild reindeer, elk, wild duck and geese, and so on.

The hunting techniques of the Yakuts hardly differed from those of other hunting peoples in Siberia. Instead of bows and arrows, guns (usually the flint type) came into use all over during the 19th century, and were used for squirrels, birds and other game; dogs were also used. A variety of traps and hunting equipment including blue-fox snares, bear-traps, hair nooses for hares and birds, and so on.

A purely Yakut method of hunting, unknown to any other people, is one in which an ox is used; the hunter skillfully approaches the game, hiding behind the ox, which he drives in front of him, then making the ox lie down, fires at the target from behind it. This method of hunting can be regarded as a modification of the well-known Tungus technique using a decoy reindeer as the bait; the modification is due to the transition from reindeer-breeding to pastoralism.

The Yakuts also had another method of hunting, unknown to the population of the taiga, which was a tradition among the steppe nomads; this consisted in driving the game on horseback, sometimes with dogs.

227 Gathering also played an important part as a subsidiary occupation, particularly among the poorer people. Pine sapwood (the inside layer of the bark) was usually gathered by women in the early spring and stored up for the winter in large quantities and in the dried form (from 10 to 100 poods per family, according to some sources).

In the northern regions where pines do not grow, they gathered larch sapwood, although it was not valued to the same degree, and various edible roots (lily, chekana) and green vegetables (wild onion, horseradish, sorrel, etc.).

Of far less importance in the economy of the Yakuts was berrying (blueberries, bog blueberries and so on).

241 The Yakuts only became familiar with soil cultivation fairly recently.
648 At the time of the arrival of the Russians, agriculture was not to be found at all in Yakutiya, and even later it was only a few Russian settlers who engaged in it. Although in certain cases the Yakuts had been sowing crops since the end of the 17th century, it was only about the middle of the 19th century that agriculture became widespread in the Yakut economy, and this was chiefly due to the influence of the Russian peasants (particularly in the Olekminskiy Okrug).

The overall development of commodity relationships helped to speed up the development of agriculture and here and there ploughing was enforced by the administration.

At the end of the 19th century, the political exiles and the exiled Skoptsy helped to spread agriculture among the Yakuts.

Nevertheless, right up to the Revolution there was comparatively little farming among the Yakut population. They sowed some barley and less wheat. The tilling techniques were always very primitive.

Crafts and Trades

323 The processing of raw materials and the making of different objects
●[53] among the Yakuts chiefly retained the nature of domestic production for personal needs and not commerce. Woodworking and the making of

skillfully made; the wooden crockery was usually decorated with carving, while the birchbark objects were decorated with horsehair designs. 322

Fur-dressing and tanning were very common. The materials were made into a great variety of different things—clothing, footwear, and headgear; carpets, underlays (usually made of horse- or cow-hide, often sewn together from pieces into a checkered mosaic), blankets (from horseskin); the leather vessels were made in a variety of sizes, ranging from the enormous simiir' for kumys down to the tiny pail or tursuk; various parts of saddles, straps, nooses and so on. The actual working of the leather and fur was very primitive—the hide was smoked (in ancient times and even in the 17th century this was done in earth stoves), crumpled, smeared with oil or cream, and there was no true tanning. The manufacture of reindeer suede was evidently learnt from the Evenks and the Evens. The Yakuts themselves did not make any cloth, either from animal wool or vegetable fiber—and only used what was imported. They did not know about spinning, nor how to roll felt. On the other hand, horsehair was widely employed; it was used for the ornamentation of birchbark and other objects, particularly for braiding different kinds of lassoes, cord, laces and nets, loops, fans to keep flies away, stuffing pillows for saddles and so on. The Yakuts also wove horsehair for decorative purposes. The individual hairs were twisted into a thread by hand on a bare knee, without using a spindle. 281 286 283 439 531

Blacksmithery was the only trade among the Yakuts which had long acquired commercial importance, although normally it was not a separate trade from agriculture. In the 17th century the Russians found it to be highly developed among the Yakuts. The iron was obtained from marsh ore, of which there was a great deal, particularly on the Vilyuy. The ore was mined along the rivers Botoma, Amga, Sola and others. It was first smelted in primitive blast furnaces. But at the beginning of the 20th century the Yakut smiths were already working with imported iron. They forged it into a variety of implements and utensils, weapons and so on. Apart from iron, the Yakut smiths worked low-grade silver, which in the 19th and 20th centuries was partly obtainable by melting down Russian coins. This silver was made into various ornaments, linings for belts, whips, horse harnessing. The equipment used in the smithies was fairly unsophisticated—furnaces worked with bellows (portable), anvils, hammer and tongs. 326 [316]

The fact that they engaged in ceramics singles out the Yakuts from the people around them. They evidently retained pottery as a relic of the Neolithic stage. Nevertheless, it was very primitive. To the dark, viscous clay they used to add powder ground from old fired pots and then mold the clay mixture diluted with water into the walls of the pot with their hands (without a wheel), using a stone to smooth them out (on the inside) and a trowel (on the outside). The pots were fired in the hearth. The pottery varied in size and the shapes and designs were crude. In the last few decades, Yakut ceramics have been replaced by Russian ones. 323

Mammoth-ivory carving (Yakutiya is rich in mammoth skeletons), which was probably not begun before the 19th century, was not a common trade, although it was an interesting one. The ivory was carved into a variety of trinkets and small boxes. 321

These were the main types of production among the Yakuts prior to the Revolution. As a whole, the Yakut economy remained at a fairly low level of development, and by and large remained a subsistence economy. Nevertheless, the sale of homemade products acquired ever-greater importance towards the end of the 19th century. This was mainly the case 433 443

[p. 258]

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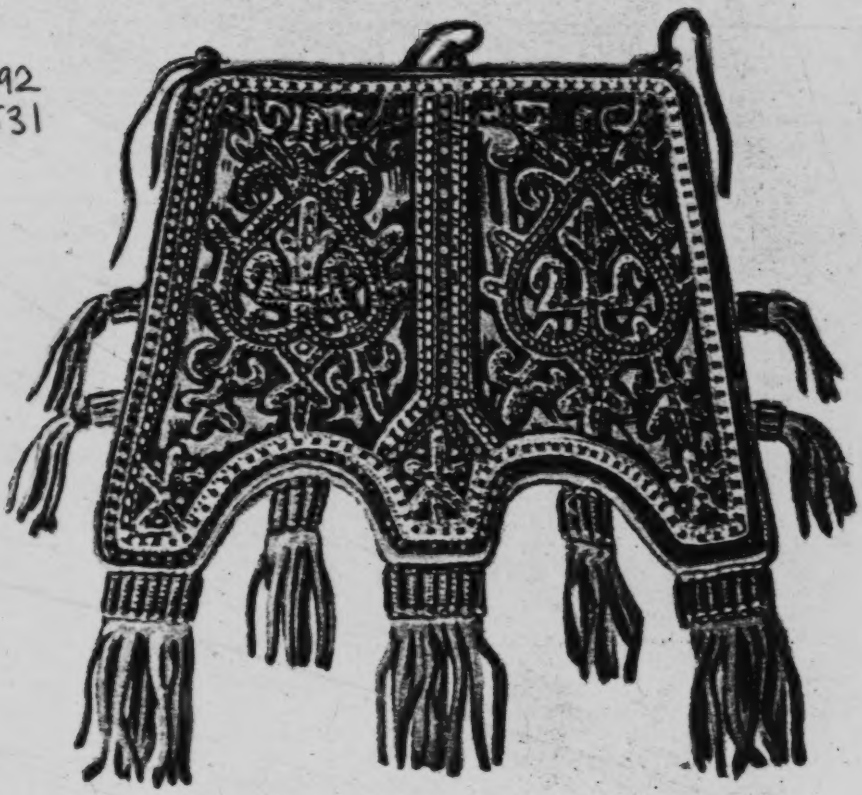

Saddle-blanket decorated with colored beads and metal plates.

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

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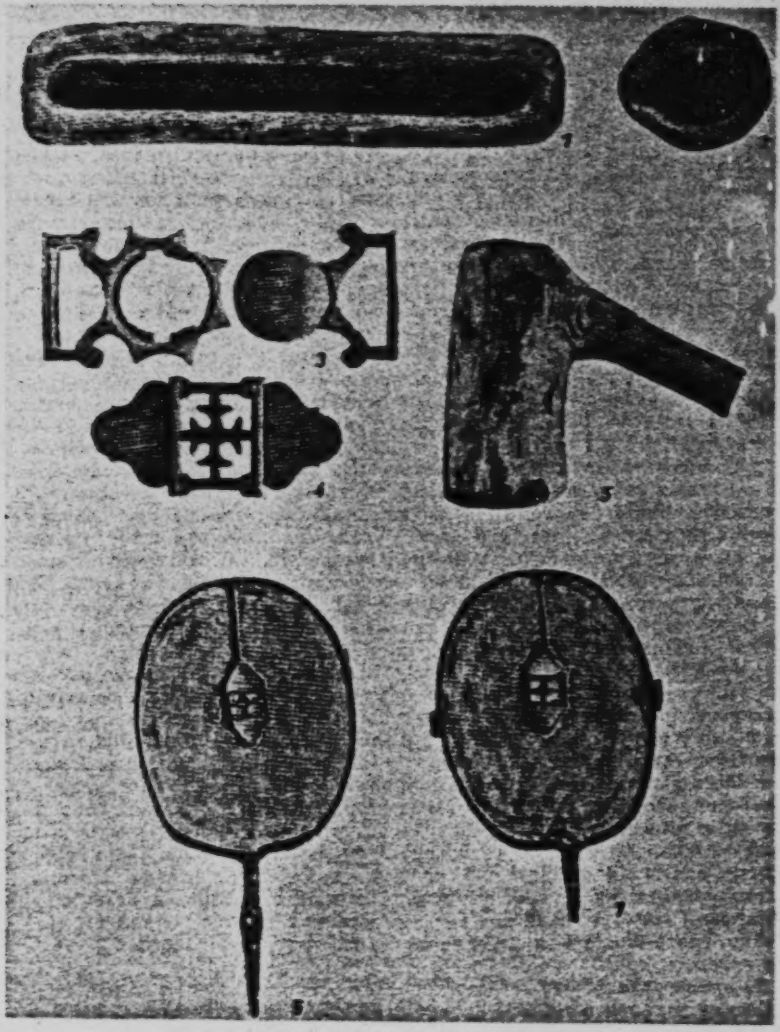

Smithing and potting implements: 1, 2—clay crucibles for melting silver and gold; 3, 4—wooden templets for casting silver belt buckles; 5—wooden hammer for mixing potter's clay; 6, 7—two halves of clay mold for casting silver and gold objects.

pillow. Richly ornamented cloth and leather sweatcloths and girths were placed under the saddle at the sides and on the cruppers, while side flaps hung down from the sides; the stirrups were usually made of metal, although a flexible, narrow strip of wood bent in a circle was sometimes used.

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Yakut sleigh.

Another means of overland transportation was the ski, which was lined underneath with horsehide and not reindeer suede. The Yakut boats were no different from the Tungus ones. They had a canoe (tyy) made of birch-bark or else flat-bottomed and made from planks. The larger vessel—the karbaz—had sails and was evidently borrowed from the Russians. 481 281 501 [177]

Settlements and Buildings

Until recently the Yakut settlements were very much scattered about. The prevalent type of populated point (yal) consisted of one, two or three yurts standing in a row; there were less than 20 people (according to the 361

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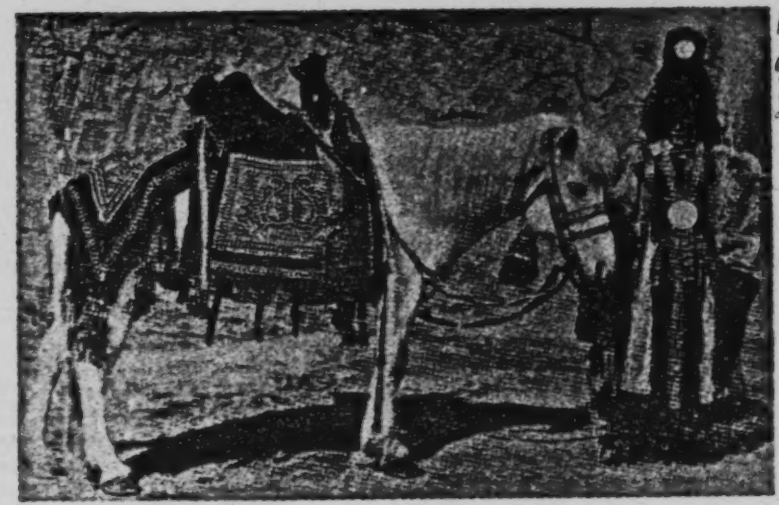


Yakut woman with horse festively saddled.

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

was associated with the severe frost; this was a particular type of fur collar or mooyturuk made from rings of squirrel tails, so that the fur stood out on all sides; this collar was put round the neck in cold weather and covered both the nose and mouth; as the wearer breathed on it and the breath gradually froze, he kept moving it round so that there was always a dry spot opposite the mouth.

The Yakut heavy fur mittens were made with space for one finger and were attached by laces, by which they hung when taken off.

Typical of the footwear (eterbes) were high kneeboots made of undressed reindeer- or horse-hide, with the hair on the outside. The summer boots (saary) were made of soft leather with a soft sole; the top part was covered with cloth and in the case of women with embroidery; the tops of the boots were tied with laces. Underneath the top footwear they wore high stockings (keenche) made of fur, or, later, cloth made in the shape of the foot. Linings of dry grass were also put inside the boots, and frequently changed.

The decorations on the women's clothing were particularly lavish and varied. Apart from various types of embroidery, appliqué and trimming, women also wore metal (silver) adornments, including large pendants consisting of rows of interlinked parallel, patterned chains hanging from a semicircle (kyl'd'yy), silver earrings of the pendant type (*ымарҕа*), various patterned bracelets (*бөҕөх*), finger-rings (*биһиэзх*), silver crucifixes (Christian influence) on massive openwork chains and so forth; all these embellishments, chiefly possessed by the toyon women, were very skillfully made by the Yakut smiths.

As regards children's clothing, there was no special type. In the poorer families, the children ran about naked or wore rags; the children of wealthier parents wore the same kind of garments as the adults, except for the size and greater number of adornments.

Food

The diet of the Yakuts from the central ulusy before the Revolution consisted first of dairy products, second, fish products, after which came vegetable products, and, finally, meat. The variety, amount and quality of the food ranged between very wide limits in the various class groups. Dairy products were consumed mainly during the summer, and as far as possible stored up for the winter. Mare's milk was chiefly used to make kumys, a refreshing, nutritious and slightly intoxicating beverage, which the Yakuts drank readily and in large quantities. During the haymaking kumys was sometimes the staple diet; a great deal of it was drunk at summer festivals (*ысыах*—the kumys festival). Over the last few decades before the Revolution, on account of the decline in horse-breeding and the development of agriculture, the consumption of kumys dropped more and more. Mare's milk was not stocked for the winter. Cow's milk was not used very much in the fresh form, but was used to make a greater variety of products. First place among them was taken by the so-called suorat, or sora, a particular kind of thick sour milk with or without some cream added. In summer fresh suorat was the commonest food, but it was also used to make winter stocks; for this purpose it was kept in large birchbark vats, to which were added berries (blueberries), roots, bones (which dissolved in the lactic acid) and any left-over milk product, and as winter approached, the whole lot was frozen and kept in that form. The resulting tar was used in wintertime to make the drink butugas, to which was added, apart from the tar, water, a little flour, pine sapwood, roots, and so on. Cream skimmed from the milk was used in the fresh, whipped form; it was called *күөрэхэй*, highly

The Yakuts are very fond of eloquence. The ability to make a good speech at a meeting is highly regarded, and the speaker is greeted with cries of approval. 537

With regard to the songs (yrya), the melodies are simple and monotonous, but there are different genres, and the images are often artistic. It is possible to sing love songs (for girls and boys), dance songs, humorous songs, shaman songs, and so on, as well as improvisations, when a person tells in song what he has been doing or seeing. The motif of this kind of song is very simple and usually consists of two or three repeated notes. 533

The Yakuts did not have any other kind of music, apart from vocal. There were no musical instruments, leaving aside the shaman tambourine and the khomus, a small iron jew's-harp known to more or less all the peoples of the Old World. [534]

The dances of the Yakuts are very original. Particularly interesting is a round called the *ohyoraa*, performed during festivals. 535

The dancers stand in a circle arm in arm and in time to the singing move with majestic steps to the left, in the direction of movement of the sun. There were variations of this dance in different localities. There were also various dancing games.

Ornamental art attained a high level of development among the Yakuts. The carving of wood and mammoth ivory; the casting and stamping of silver, copper and gold; the embroidery and appliqué of leather and fabric; fur appliqué and mosaic; the weaving of horsehair: all these were arts performed with materials available to the Yakuts and in which the craftsmen showed particular artistic taste and skill. Basically there was no graphic art for other than decorative purposes among the Yakuts, just as in the folk art of the past as a whole, if we disregard the animal, and human figures made by the shamans, and the later carved sculpture made in imitation of Russian examples. 531 532

The style of the Yakut design was original, although it contained Tungus, Mongol and other elements. Geometric motifs predominated, at times rather intricate ones. On the carved wooden vessels we find circular designs consisting of straight, serrated and wavy lines with points, dashes and so on, covering almost the entire surface. In the stamping, casting and birchbark carving, there predominate symmetrical, rounded figures, such as hooks, meanders, pincer-shapes, and so on, with linear squares, concentric circles and so forth. Very typical is a design found on scoops and saddlecloths; here one is struck by the central two-horned lyre—a purely Yakut motif. 531

The darkening of silver, and the painting of wood and alder with a concoction of alder, were developed.

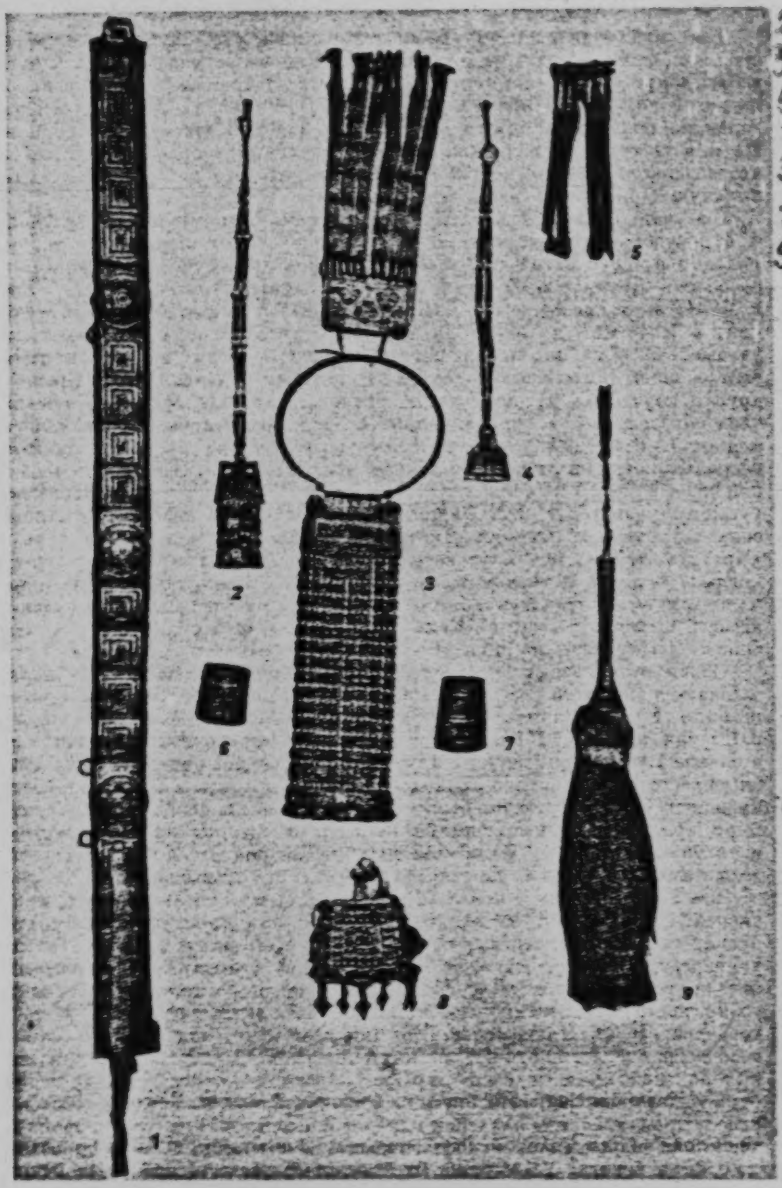
In the selection of colors, preference was shown for black, red and, to some extent yellow and blue. The same preference was shown in the selection of fabric of the appropriate color.

* * *

Such was the culture of the Yakut people up to the October Revolution. 175

Particularly important was the cultural assistance which the Yakuts obtained from the fraternal Russian people during the prerevolutionary years. In the 19th century it was mainly the political exiles, beginning with the Decembrists, who spread culture through Yakutiya. There were also other progressive Russian people who diffused the beginnings of a cultivated way of life among the Yakuts. In particular, they laid the foundations of the Yakut written language. 177 212

[p. 286]



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Silver ornaments: 1—silver belt; 2—embellishments for braids; 3—necklace; 4—women's tinder steel; 5—pendant for braids; 6, 7—bracelets; 8—women's bags; 9—fan.

53: Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

[p. 299]

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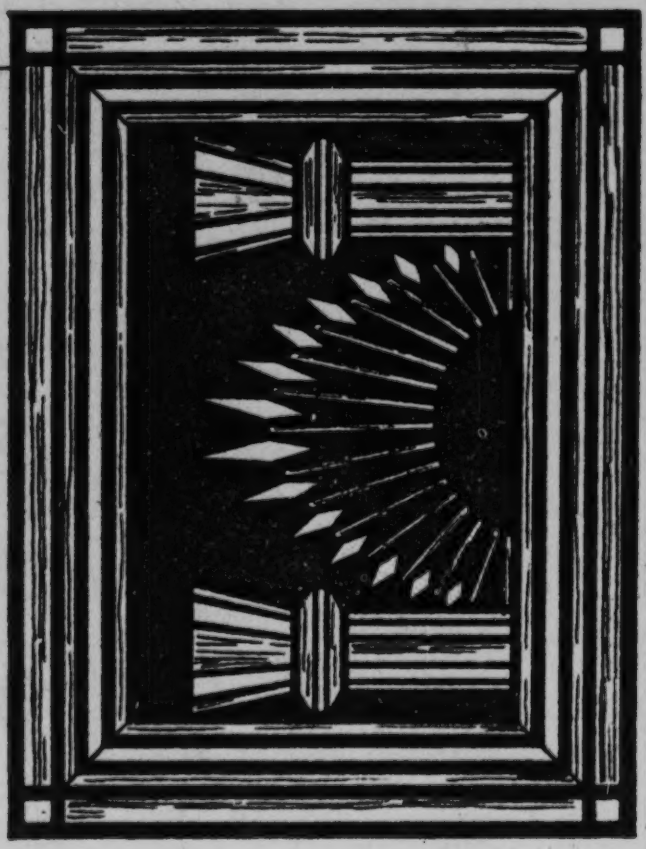

Appliqué made from straw and colored paper on lid of wooden box.

53: Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

[p. 300]

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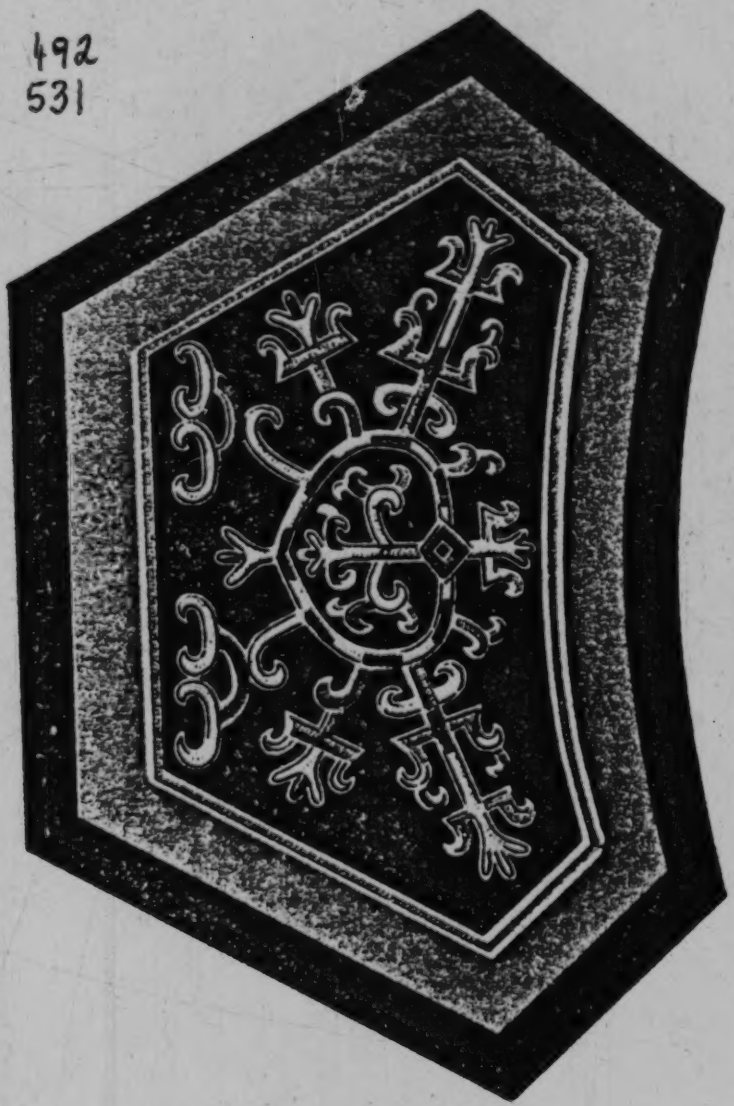

Saddlecloth embroidered with colored thread.

233 binding) [Figure 2h-i]. A man never uses a female knot to tie a
284 reindeer, for he would be laughed at if he did. They tie the rein-
[412] deer to trees or bushes; in those places where there are no trees
or bushes--for example, on the hilltops--the reindeer are tied to special wooden pegs--the kojnos--about forty or fifty centimeters in length, which are stuck into the ground and which at the same time serve as digging sticks for unearthing edible roots [Fig. 2e].

233 In summer the Dolgan ride reindeer, and only their "twigs"
492 (boats) are carried on special sledges with two crossbars; in winter, however, they ride on sleds exclusively. [189] According to the stories, in ancient times they rode only reindeer both summer and winter and borrowed the sledge gear later from the Tavgi.

The reindeer harness is in reality not as simple as it would appear at first glance; and incidentally, in all the Russian ethnographic literature we do not have anything like a complete description of it. If someone who knew nothing of the ways of harnessing reindeer were to take it into his head to hitch one up [Fig. 3] according to the descriptions found in the available literature, he would find out that he was quite helpless. Any ethnographic description can be completely scientific only if by following it one could completely and precisely duplicate the described event or object, and it is our task to strive toward this end with all possible efforts. To give a detailed description of the Dolgan winter reindeer harness means to give a description of the harness which is the most widespread at the present time in the north, starting from Scandinavia and extending to the eastern tip of Asia, excluding the Paleo-Asiatics. Such insignificant variations among the separate peoples who live in the aforementioned territory as, for example, the fact that the Nenets and the Tavgi steer from the left side while the Dolgan steer from the right side, and other minor details, do not change the general construction of the summer and winter harnesses of the reindeer.

The bast' ŋa--the halter used for riding a reindeer [Fig. 2k] consists of a strap sewn together in the form of a circle and placed on the forehead; fastened to its sides are two small straps made of reindeer hide [Fig. 2e-m] by means of which the halter is fastened at the back of the head; to the lower part is sewn a strap called njuogu--a small rein for guiding the reindeer [Fig. 2n]. The halters
[531] of female reindeer, the reindeer used as pack animals, and the "shaytan'i" riding reindeer (1) have the part over the forehead

1. "Shaytan'i" riding reindeer are reindeer on which are

[531] carried the holy objects of the household--the "shaytany."
233

492 trimmed with green or red cloth and are decorated with glass beads [Fig. 2o]. In order that the reindeer which is being led by the rein attached to the first reindeer may not pull back, the natives put on him a halter with a bone comb known as the keebee [Fig. 2p-r]. When the reindeer begins to slow down the teeth of the comb dig into the back of his head causing enough pain to make him run faster.

Saddles are of two types: the first--the male type--is the çykeeŋdii [Fig. 3A], and the second--the female or pack type-- is the 'ŋ''r [Fig. 3B]. The male saddle consists of two long boards fixed parallel to each other by means of [190] two curved branch pieces of horn or branches of a tree which have been sawed off to the proper length and then nailed to the ends of the boards. The boards are sewn round with leather which is stuffed with reindeer fur, forming a s'tt'k--two cushions for sitting on. On the female saddles, or packsaddles, in place of the horns which do not stick up above the cushions there are high semicircular pommels on the front and back ends called soroon. [Figure 4]

[531] The frame of the female saddle, or packsaddle is more massive in construction, the cushions are thicker and broader, and the lower part of the front pommel is trimmed with red or green cloth and is decorated with glass beads [Fig. 3r]. The front pommel is completely covered with red ocher, the rear pommel is left white and is only decorated with ocher. On packsaddles, besides this, the rear pommel is richly decorated with tin incrustations [Fig. 3h]. All forms of the saddles have a crack running down the whole length of the middle which fits precisely over the shoulder blades and vertebrae of the reindeer. The saddle is not placed over the center of the reindeer's spine, but rather on the shoulder blades, since the spinal column of the Dolgan reindeer is not strong enough to bear the weight and breaks under the strain.

A female or pack reindeer is saddled up in the following manner [Fig. 4]: first the saddle is mounted on the reindeer, and then a small rug made of reindeer heads--the dah'na--is put on so that the bags will not rub sores on the sides of the reindeer, and then two bags sewed together from hide obtained from reindeer legs and tied together are thrown across the saddle. All this is made secure with a leather saddle girth called timeektiin [Fig. 2r] which is three or four fingers in breadth and has an iron ring on one end. Bags are never thrown across a male saddle: [Fig. 5] the saddle is simply

233 together in pairs and thus obtains the equivalent of one pulley with
401 two large openings [Fig. 9m].
492 This method of harnessing the reindeer is quite convenient thanks to the system of pulleys: each of the reindeer pulls an equal share of the load, and a contributing factor here is the fact that going from right to left the reins of the reindeer get progressively shorter
[531] [Fig. 9A]. The ala strap and the girth of the dressharness are covered with red or green cloth and decorated with varicolored glass beads, or else the parts made of reindeer hide are decorated with designs sewn with thread made from reindeer tendons. The cargo harness is much simpler: it consists only of an ala strap, which is canvas for the most part (made from sacks), and there is no girth at all. Usually there is no halter either; the reindeer are tied by their necks to the back of the front sled. There are either two or four reindeer in a cargo team and when there are four each pair of them has only one neck-rope [Figs. 8C and 9N]. We think it is helpful to reproduce a special drawing [Fig. 10] in order to introduce a simplified description of the terms used by the local Russian speakers for the parts of the sled.

493 Reindeer sleds among the Dolgan can be separated into five types: 1) Bytej s'rga, or olok s'rga--the "covered" or light sled [Fig. 11]; 2) 'raak'--"iraka" in the local Russian pronunciation [Fig. 12]; 3) setii s'rga--the cargo sled, or the sled "which is lead" [Fig. 13]; 4) tard'' or turku--the cargo sled [Fig. 14]; and 5) turkucaank', or little turku [Fig. 16].

[783] The "covered" sled is used exclusively for light riding; in the Noril'sk Rayon only the women ride on them--the men consider this a profanation for themselves, since after a trip on a female sled it would be necessary for them to cross over the path of the shaytany--the household spirits--or of a wild animal, which is considered to be unclean. In other regions this rule is not observed; there men too ride on "covered" sleds. The "covered" sled is distinguished by high legs forty-five to fifty centimeters long, of which there are five, eight, twelve, or fourteen on one sled. These legs are slanted toward the back of the sled, and they are mounted in such a way that they are farther apart from each other at the bottom than they are at the top [Fig. 10]. This is done so that the considerable height of the body of the sled will not make the whole sled unstable and allow it to turn over. Such a construction is also convenient in that it allows a person sitting in the sled to stand with his feet on the runners, which stick out beyond the line of the so-called "bayka," in

493 the openings in the runners are made at an angle. The opening
2 in the front end of the runner which is used for the end of the bayka is also bored at an angle slanting upwards. If the legs were not slanted the sled would become rickety under the strain when the runners get wet through and tend to straighten out, thus pushing the frame of the sled back. The slanted opening for the end of the bayka serves to support the runners and keep them from straightening out. In order to prevent the runners from straightening out on the two-legged iraka, which has its legs sticking straight up, the openings for the ends of the bayka have a downward slant.

The setii s'rga--the cargo sled--is used during the winter nomadic trips. In its construction it is somewhat similar to the first type of sled, but is distinguished from the latter by its greater dimensions and its massiveness; in the front and back it has high "tundras," which also form something similar to a box into which even small objects can be put without fearing that they will fall out and get lost. The legs--which are still longer than those of the "covered" sled--are four or five in number; they are likewise slanted toward the back of the sled. Cargo sleds--or "koshovki," as they are called locally--are not used among the Dolgan; they are used exclusively for the transportation of loads by commercial organizations of the tundra. They are gotten ready in autumn in Dudinka; they may be as long as three meters, and have three short (twenty centimeters), broad legs, with a distance between them of from sixty to eighty centimeters. The runners are made broad or thin, with a bend almost at the front tip, and to avoid their straightening out they are usually hewn out of a tree with a natural curve at the root. The thin top ends of the legs have a semicircle cut out of them on the outboard side, in which is fixed a long thin stick which substitutes for the bayka.

493 The turkucaak'--the little turku--is a light male sled, entirely
531 similar in type to the turku, but smaller in its dimensions; it is distinguished from the turku by the elegance of its trimming; by its high, decorated board back [Fig. 16]; by the netting made out of straps which is put along the sides of the sled so that things cannot fall out of the sled; and by the legs and runners, which are painted with brown ocher, with black graphite, or with dark blue or green paint which has been purchased; the sled has three or four short legs. The little turku is widespread beyond the Khatanga River among the Transtundra Yakut and is almost entirely absent in the west.

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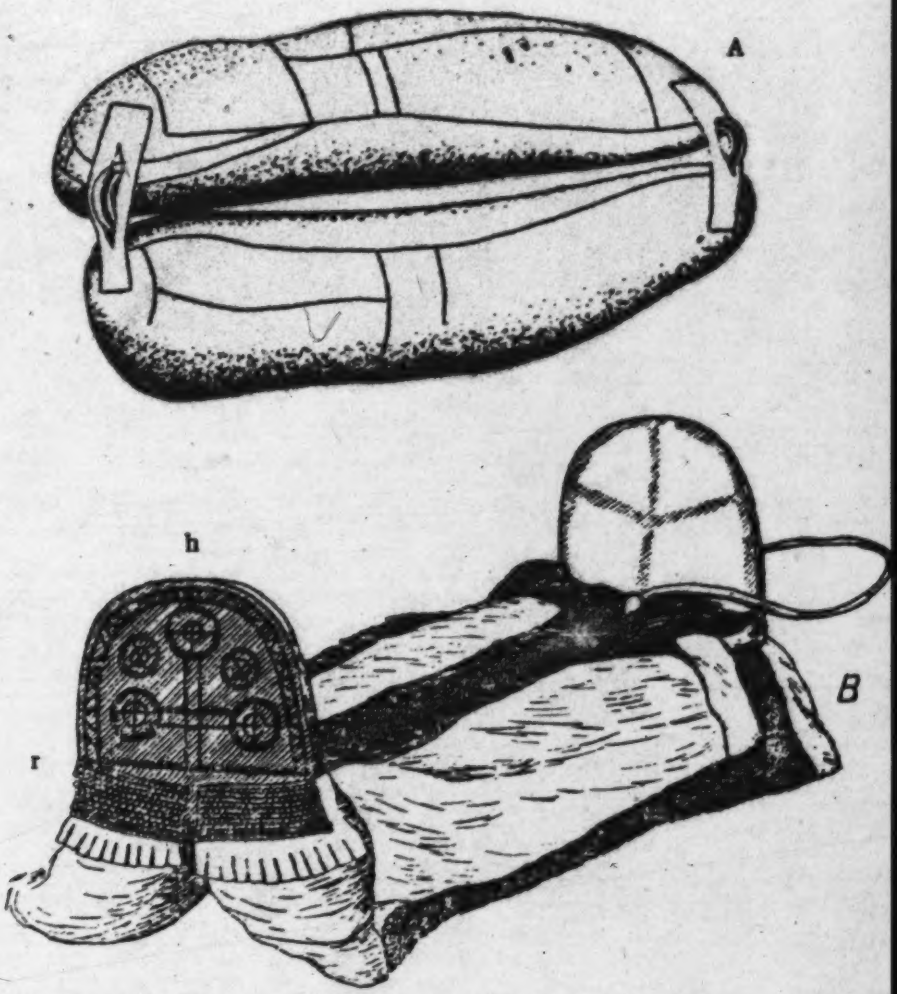


Fig. 3

A -- male reindeer saddle
B -- female or pack reindeer saddle
h -- pommel, painted with ochre and decorated with tin encrustations
r -- glass beads sewn on a brightly-colored cloth

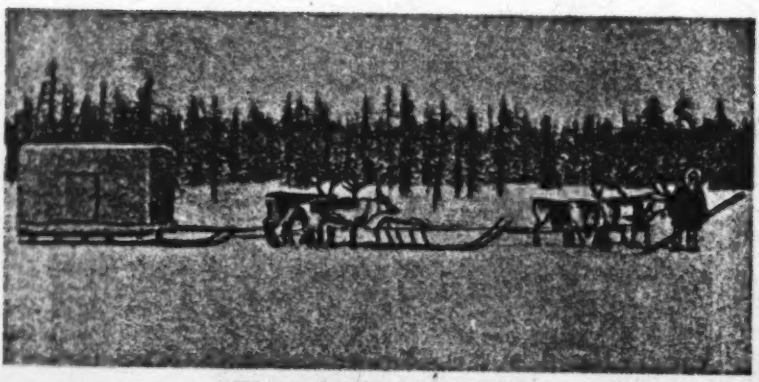
54: Popov--42 E-3 (no date) 1935 Yakut Dolgan

[facing p. 198]

Fig. 16

Light sled "turkucaank." Above -- decorated backs of sleds

55:Popov E-5 (no date) 1964 RV2 Yakut RV2
Dolgan



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Winter dwelling, sled tent.

There are more than a dozen versions of the Dolgan national costume, all with their special names, though only different in a few trivial details. The characteristic feature of both men's and women's clothing is a slightly elongated coattail at the back. The Dolgans themselves explain this by the fact that when sitting down on the cold ground in a tent they can spread out the long coattail underneath them. 291

Even before the Revolution household clothing for men and women was made of bought material. Men wore shirts and trousers of the Russian style, and women wore dresses, on top of which they put on aprons without openings. Both the men's shirts and the women's aprons almost always had side pockets and were embroidered with narrow colored piping and numerous buttons. They did not wear any underclothing. 291 177

In the summer and winter men and women wore a cloth coat called the sontap. In the winter they wore a second fox-fur or hareskin coat beneath it. In the winter instead of the cloth coats they sometimes wore the deerskin open dokha (parka) or short coat, and ventless fur clothing with a hood with the fur outside, i.e., the sokuy. When traveling the men wore a sokuy over their cloth coat or deerskin parka. In rainy summer weather a cloth sokuy was put on. In the winter the women wore a son or long polar-fox or hareskin coat, on top of which they had a sontap or sangyyak (deerskin coat). Men and women girdled their clothing with bead-studded belts. The mukalkaan, a bead-embroidered men's parka, was close to the Even type. The old-fashioned men's and women's aprons were also similar to the Even type. Men's and women's hats (bergese) were shaped like hoods. The top was cut from fox feet or from cloth, and was embroidered with beads or finished with narrow bands of colored cloth. Winter footwear was made of deer feet and came in two types: a type reaching to the knee or higher, corresponding to the Evenk boot and often ornamented with beads. 291 [531]

Summer footwear was made of suede. A hole was made in the middle of the sole in summer footwear so that any water leaking inside during walking could run out.

Social Relations and Religion

By the time the Russians arrived, the Dolgans were splitting up into clans. Kinship was reckoned on the male side. There were certain traces 614 611 100

[K.662]

55:Popov E-5 (no date) 1964 RV2 Yakut RV2
Dolgan

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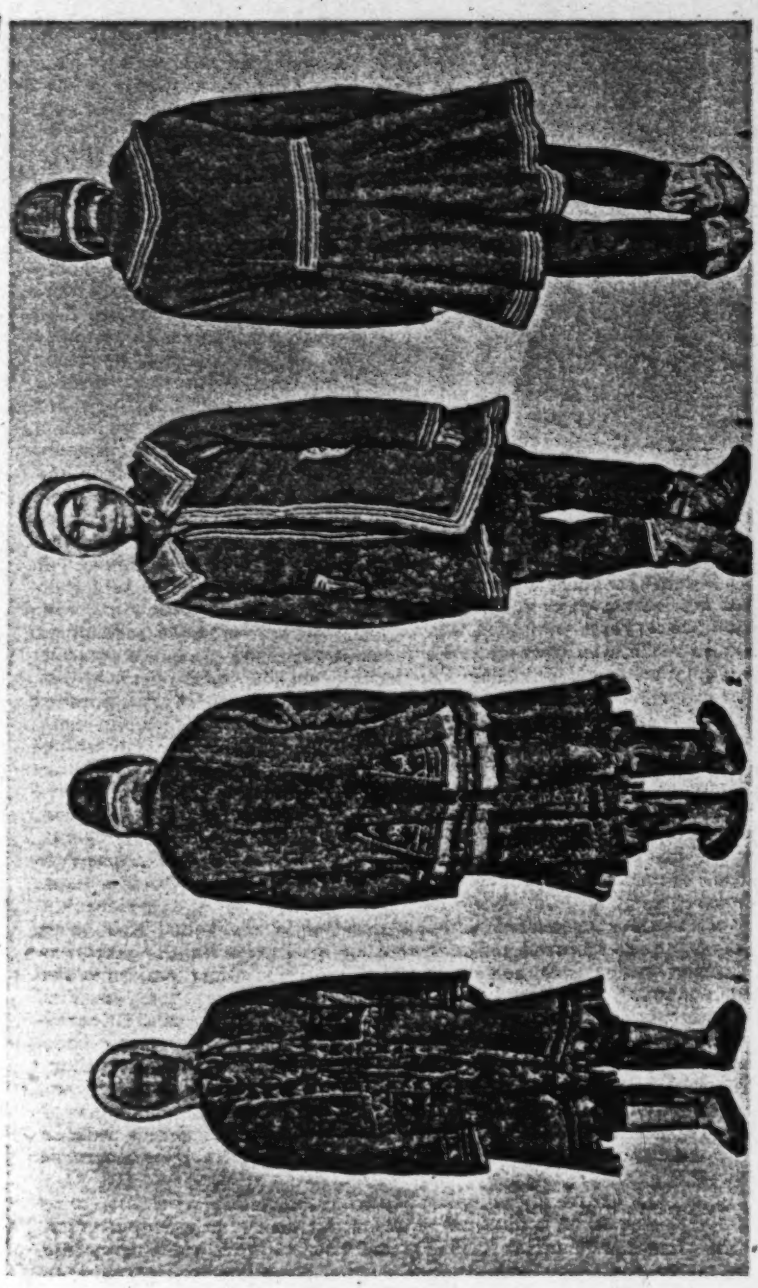

Men's clothing:
1, 2—winter; 3, 4—summer.

55:Popov E-5 (no date) 1964 RV2 Yakut RV2
Dolgan

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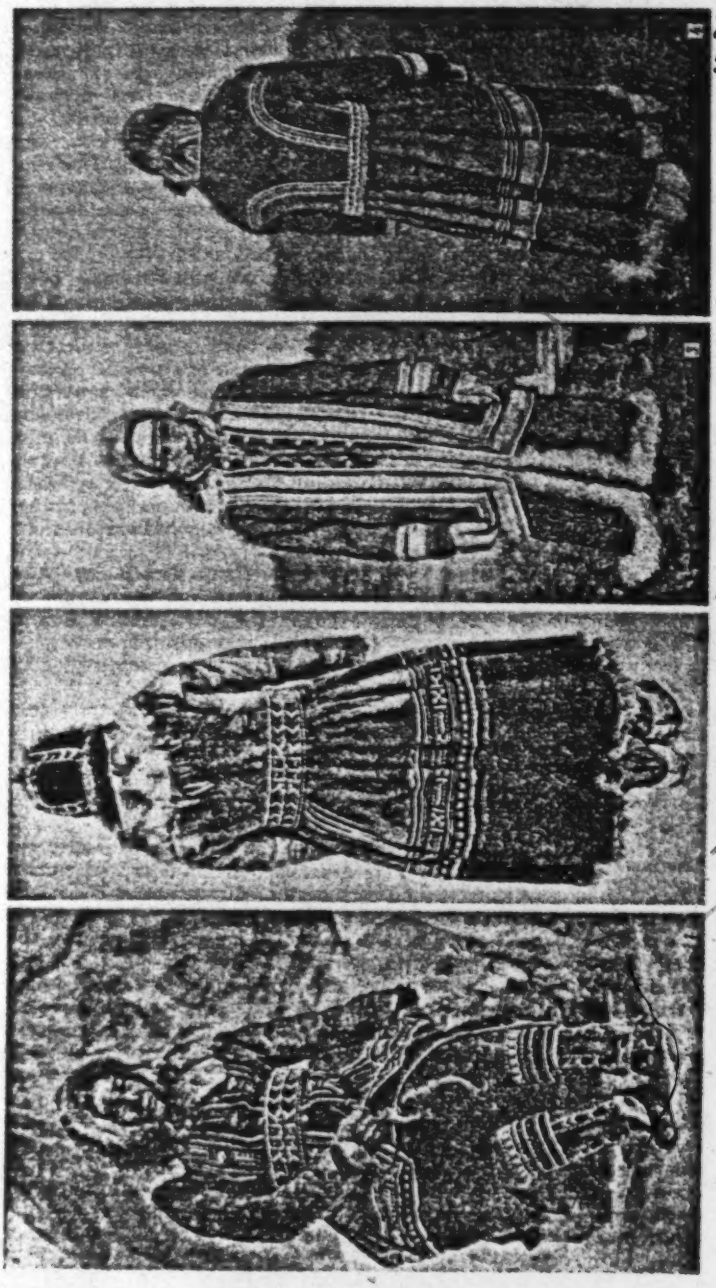

Women's clothing:
1, 2—winter; 3, 4—summer.

421 was considered collective property, particularly in summer when several households nomadized together. Having killed a wild reindeer, the hunter 224 was expected to give up the skin and meat to the families of his group, but 226 keep the head and neck for himself. During the collective trapping of geese or spearing of wild reindeer a representative was chosen to make the division, and everything caught was divided up by families, according to the number of members.

224 The sites to be used by the nomadic groups for their summer hunting and fishing were decided in the spring, before the mosquitoes appeared. The heads of the groups would agree on the places where their own kin would hunt. Under this system each group hunted in new areas each year. Ownership of the polar-fox traps took a different form. The traps were private property. When setting new traps "behind" (i.e., to the south of) the old ones, no permission was required, but if they were set "in front of" the old ones (to the north), whence the polar fox came, it was essential to have the permission of the owner of the old traps, since when the foxes came down, they would be caught chiefly in the new ones. It was not forbidden to hunt other animals at the sites of the traps.

601 The system of kinship among the Dolgans was the classificatory type, 882 and the terms used for kinship were Yakut. The family was of the patriarchal type, but the young people enjoyed great freedom until they married.

771 Although the Dolgans were considered Christians and observed the ex- 776 ternal, ritualistic aspects of Russian Orthodoxy, they also retained their old animistic beliefs. Deities and spirits were divided into three categories (the same as for the Yakuts): ichchi, or incorporeal, invisible beings, who brought to life anything which they entered; ayyy or spirits well-disposed towards humans; abaasy or spirits hostile towards humans and causing various sicknesses and misfortunes; these lived in the earth and in the underworld. A person was believed to get sick and die because the abaasy had stolen his soul and carried it away to the underworld, and then, in- 756 vading the person, proceeded to eat him. The guardians of the people against the wicked spirits and mediators between humans and spirits were [171] the oyun or shamans. The shaman garb and tambourine among the Dolgans were the same as among the Evenks.

In their religion the Dolgans worshipped the so-called saytaans. The 776 saytaans could take a great variety of forms, for example, a stone of unusual shape or an ugly wild-deer antler. Any object could be a saytaan if a shaman commanded a spirit, ichchi, to enter it. The saytaans were greatly revered both as family and hunting patrons.

764 The Dolgans buried their dead in the ground. The western (Noril'sk) [531] Dolgans did not usually erect a log structure over the grave, but only left a mound of earth onto which they felled a tree. The eastern Dolgans built log structures over the grave, which they often embellished with intricate carving. A reindeer was slaughtered near the grave and the clothing in which the deceased had died was either left on the ground or hung on the tree.

Folklore

538 The indigenous folklore of the Dolgans was represented by riddles, tales, historical legends, epic poems and stories of everyday life—the latter constituting the predominant type. The stories tell of the nomadic life of the Dolgans in all its real, everyday context. They are brief, but extremely varied in content. Very popular were stories of animals—their origin, their metamorphosis into people and back again. A particular group was composed

55:Popov E-5 (no date) 1964 RV2 Yakut RV2
Dolgan

Women's chestpiece embroidered with colored beads.

of tales called ustuoruya (from the Russian word "istoriya" or history), in which the heroes were Russian merchants, poor state-owned peasants, Ivan Tsarevich and other characters from Russian fairytales. Their plots are also close to those of the Russian tales. The historical legends tell of journeys to strange countries and the unusual adventures involved. Some of them are close in content to the legends of the Olenek Khosun epic.

Both in theme and in method of narration, the epic tales were very close to the Yakut olonkho and were even called by the same name. They often describe a way of life alien to the Dolgans; they mention horses and cows, but hardly ever mention reindeer. Their theme is the struggle between heroes and persons consorting with evil spirits. The dialogues, just as in the Yakut epic tales, were sung. Dolgan songs are either short (lyrical) or long. The former were not performed by professionals, and the composers and performers were usually boys and girls. The long songs were performed by highly gifted improvisers or "songsters," who were relatively few and far between.

The storytellers were regarded as the elite, chosen by the good deities and spirits. Gifted storytellers created their own schools and whole generations of young storytellers studied under them. According to the old beliefs of the Dolgans, all the images drawn by the storytellers could be turned into visible images or shadows. This belief in the ability of the storyteller to re-create real images by his words was exploited by the Dolgan shamans to make their methods of "curing" the sick more convincing. Sometimes, to determine which spirit the disease had come from, the shaman would send for a storyteller. The latter would begin telling an epic tale as dusk fell. As soon as the hero of the tale began to gain the upper hand over his adversary, the spirit which had allegedly been eating the patient began to emerge to help his brother spirit. As soon as he saw the evil spirit and knew what kind it was, the shaman cast a spell, now knowing what he had to do to cure the sick person. During heavy epidemics shamans often resorted to the help of the storytellers by asking them to spend evenings telling stories in which all the adventures of the heroes had a happy ending. Since it was considered that the images in the epic tales became visible, in the spring, when the geese arrived, no stories were recounted so that the images would not frighten the geese. To avoid frightening wild deer, stories were not told on the eve of the hunt.

The Dolgans had no musical instruments. It was only at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries that the Yakut jew's-harp began to

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Dolgan

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Setting bait for foxes. "Victory" collective farm, Khatangskiy Rayon, Taymyr National Okrug.

become common. The art of dancing was practically unknown to the Dolgans. 534
Like the Evenks, they only had rounds (with the refrain "kheyro") in which 535
the men and women went round and round, leading each other by the arm 171
and stamping on the ground.

The graphic art of the Dolgans was of an applied nature. Both festive 531
and ordinary clothing was richly ornamented with beads or appliquéd with 194
narrow strips of colored material. Patterned embroidery with deerhair on suede dyed red with an infusion of alder bark or ochre, or dyed black with graphite, was common. Also to be found was fine openwork embroidery with tendon thread on the straps and belts of the reindeer harness. Decorating the clothing was a job of the women. The men mainly engaged in 321
mammoth-ivory carving. They acquired a particularly high degree of skill in carving cheek-plates for the reindeer halter. Tin-inlaid fronts for reindeer saddles and knife handles were also found. The smiths were con- 326
sidered to be very skilled at inlaying iron objects with copper and silver. The runners and backs of light, low sleds common in the Khatangskiy Rayon show an intriguing range of colors. Dolgan designs for the most part are 331
geometric; they consist of combinations of crosses, semicircles, zigzags and broken lines. Wood-carving of a religious nature was also commonly 322
found. The representations were usually very symbolic.

The Post–Revolutionary Period in the Life of the Dolgans

[In 1926, there were already 17 cooperative stores in the Dolgan territory. 631
In 1931, the former clan Soviets were changed over and replaced by territorial nomadic Soviets, which went to make up the Taymyr Dolgan-Nennish 443
National Okrug.

[Collectivization of the Dolgans was begun in 1930–31 and completed in 474
1938. The Dolgan collective farms have collectivized reindeer herds, lines 233
of permanent polar-fox traps, supplies of portable steel springtraps, 224
firearms for hunting and protection of the herds, seines and vertical nets, reindeer harness, sleds, buildings, and special Arctic clothing. The